

FT MEADE
GenColl

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Class. Copyright No.

PZ3
Shelf A823

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

22
THE ILLEGAL MARRIAGE.

By Hon. EUELYN ASHBY.

THE

Select
Series

No. 6



NEW YORK
STREET & SMITH, PUBLISHERS.
25-31 ROSE STREET.

A delicious substitute for, and avoiding the
injurious effects of Tea and Coffee.

VAN HOUTEN'S COCOA

"BEST & GOES FARTHEST,"

is **THE ORIGINAL Pure Soluble Cocoa.**

Invented and patented in Holland
and, *ever since its invention*, has re-
mained *unequaled in solubility, agree-
able taste and nutritive qualities.*

Easily Digested. Made Instantly.

Invaluable in FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, and RAILWAY
STATIONS, in the CAMP, on SHIPS, for WORKMEN (at home
and to take to their work), and *in all places* where a *refreshing*
and *nourishing beverage* is required at a *moment's notice.*

The English high-class paper "*Health*" says:
"Its purity is beyond question,
ONCE TRIED, ALWAYS USED."

C. J. VAN HOUTEN & ZOON, Weesp-Holland.

SOLD BY ALL GROCERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

ASK FOR VAN HOUTEN'S, AND TAKE NO OTHER.

MADAME ROWLEY'S TOILET MASK OR FACE GLOVE



The Toilet Mask in position to the face
To be worn three times in the week.

is the *only natural beautifier* for bleaching and preserving the skin and removing complexional imperfections.

It is soft and pliable, and can be easily applied and worn without discomfort or inconvenience.

The *Mask* is patented, has been introduced ten years, and is the *only genuine* article of the kind.

It is recommended by eminent physicians and scientific men as a substitute for injurious cosmetics.

A few Specimen Extracts from Testimonial Letters.

"I am so rejoiced at having found at last an article that will indeed improve the complexion."

"Every lady who desires a faultless complexion should be provided with the Mask."

"My face is as soft and smooth as an infant's."

"I am perfectly delighted with it."

"As a medium for removing discolorations, softening and beautifying the skin, I consider it unequaled."

"I find that it removes freckles, tan, sunburn, and gives the complexion a soft, smooth surface."

"I must tell you how delighted I am with your Toilet Mask; it gives unbounded satisfaction."

"The Mask certainly acts upon the skin with a mild and beneficial result, making it smoother and clearer, and seeming to remove pimples, irritations, etc., with each application."

"It does even more than is claimed for it."

COMPLEXION BLEMISHES may be hidden imperfectly by cosmetics and powders, but can only be removed permanently by the Toilet Mask. By its use every kind of spots, impurities, roughness, etc., vanish from the skin, leaving it soft, clear, brilliant, and beautiful. It is harmless, costs little, and saves hundreds of dollars uselessly expended for cosmetics, powders, lotions, etc. It prevents and removes **WRINKLES**, and is both a complexion preserver and beautifier. Famous society ladies, actresses, belles, etc., use it.

Valuable illustrated pamphlet, with proofs and full particulars, mailed free by

THE TOILET MASK CO., 1167 Broadway, New York.



"GOOD HEAVEN, MORGAN! WHO HAS DONE THIS?" "SHE—MY DAU——"—(P. 12.)

THE SELECT SERIES.

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION,

Devoted to Good Reading in American Fiction.

~~~~~  
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$13.00 PER YEAR.

No. 61.—OCTOBER 1, 1890.

*Copyrighted, 1890, by Street & Smith.*

*Entered at the Post-Office, New York, as Second-Class Matter.*  
~~~~~

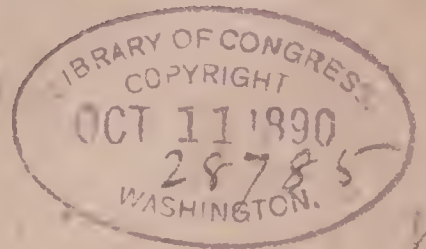
THE ILLEGAL MARRIAGE;

OR,

Cecy Morgan's Trial.

—
BY

HON. EVELYN ASHBY.



NEW YORK:
STREET & SMITH, Publishers,
31 Rose Street.

BEECHAM'S PILLS

Painless.

Effectual.

—*—
Act
like
Magic
on
the Vital
Organs.



—*—
One
Dose
Relieves
in
Twenty
Minutes.

Worth a Guinea a Box.

—*—
FOR ALL BILIOUS AND NERVOUS DISORDERS,
SUCH AS

Sick Headache,
Weak Stomach,
Impaired Digestion,
Constipation,
Disordered Liver, &c.,

Arousing with the Rosebud of Health the whole Physical
Energy of the human frame.

Beecham's Pills, taken as directed, will quickly **RESTORE**
FEMALES to complete health.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS. PRICE 25 CENTS PER BOX.

Prepared only by THOS. BEECHAM, St. Helens,
LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND.

B. F. ALLEN & CO., Sole Agents for United States, 365 & 367 Canal
Street, New York,

who (if your druggist does not keep them) will mail Beecham's Pills on receipt of
price—but *inquire first*. Please mention this Publication.

THE ILLEGAL MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ECHACONNEE TRAGEDY.

About the middle of autumn one can find few climates more agreeable than that of the middle counties of Georgia and Alabama. During the day the air is warm and pleasant; a soft, purplish haze hangs over the landscape; and the evenings are superb.

Italy cannot boast of more gorgeous sunsets than those of the Georgian middle counties. The twilight is long, and blends slowly with the moonlight, which silvers the sandy soil and sets out the dark pines in bold relief.

Near the swamps which border upon some creek, there is a peculiar and indescribable charm in these moonlight evenings. The senses steeped in the perfume of roses, mingled with the rarer odor of magnolias; while from the dark woods which skirt the silvered cotton-fields come the songs of the mocking-bird, as sweet and varied as those of the European nightingale.

But here as elsewhere nature has various moods,

each producing its peculiar effect upon the mind of man—each having a marked influence upon even the beasts of the field.

Sometimes the sun goes down a blood-red disk behind a veil of purplish-blue haze, in which, an hour later, hangs the somber new moon, slowly dipping its crescent down toward the pines. The air is heavy and still, thousands of frogs make the evening melodious with their pipings, while the song of the mocking-bird is exchanged for the plaintive notes of the whip-poor-will.

This state of the atmosphere is particularly observed along the Echaconnee—a stream bordered with dank, heavy swamps, home of the alligator and deadly moccasin—which runs through, and forms a part of the dividing line between the counties of Bibb, Crawford, and Houston. At such times a presentiment of trouble, or a nameless feeling of coming ill, seems to pervade the atmosphere, having a wonderfully depressing effect upon the mind.

On a night like this, some few years ago, Mr. William Stannard—a man of five-and-thirty, and a large planter in the county of Houston—sat on the veranda of his house, slowly puffing his Havana in the shadow of a large magnolia. Very quiet he sat, moving only now and then when he indolently took the cigar from his mouth and blew out a long cloud of smoke.

It was a calm and graceful picture which was there presented. Perhaps Mr. Stannard—or Colonel Stannard as he should be called—was not one who would be generally termed “a very handsome man,” yet there was something about him which never failed to attract a second glance.

Tall and slight as he at first appeared, the idea of latent strength was suggested; and as one looked more closely at his compact frame his shoulders seemed to grow in breadth, while a muscular power, concealed beneath the lazy grace of his manner, became apparent.

The very idea of placidity seemed to lurk in his deep-blue, almost hazel eyes; and a dark-brown mustache and imperial covered all the defects of outline that there might have been about the lower part of his face. His well-shaped hand, small enough and white enough for a lady, was a strong point of beauty; but it was muscular as well, and had held the sword with which he fought his way to a colonelcy and honor.

As he sat thus, under his own vine and fig-tree, his fine appearance, his simple yet costly dress, and his placid manner, indicated a man of travel and culture as well as a wealthy planter; and he looked like one well satisfied with himself and with the world.

But though seemingly content on this particular evening he had to confess that his mind was ill at ease, and in vain he tried to assign some good reason for his unusual depression.

A mist was gathering over the valley, and as his eyes turned toward the belt of woods which designated the line of the Echaconnee, he saw the half-obscured new moon slowly drooping down behind the pines. The stars were hidden, and as the feeble light of the moon grew dim the shadows deepened, and the fire on his cigar threw fitful circles of light around his chair.

Presently even his cigar was forgotten, and the hand which held it fell lightly upon his knee, while

his eyes looked vacantly out upon the indistinct garden. Fancy had carried away his soul. A vision had come to him—a vision of the sweet girl he loved, whose lovely dark eyes seemed to be looking at him then, and whose fair face, surrounded by a halo of light, was perfectly visible to him.

Cecilia Morgan! Beautiful Cecy Morgan! Why had she come to haunt him now, when nearly overpowered in his struggle to forget her? Had he not given her up to another? Had he not long known that his was a hopeless love? Had he not fought hard to crush the affection for her that he must not express? Of the love that nearly conquered him he was now thinking, and she was ever there to make his struggle all the harder.

It was useless; he loved her still—loved her truly and fondly, but he could never call her—wife.

Often enough he had brooded over this, and had tried to make himself believe that he was reconciled to her loss; but he knew now that he had made a failure. He loved her still, and knew now that he should always love her, as man loves but once in his life. But this was misery now since she was betrothed to another.

“She is there,” he said, aloud, stretching his arms toward the creek, beyond which Cecy Morgan lived with her father. “She is there, so near me, and yet so far away. The distance is widening between us. Henceforth I can be nothing to her.”

What comfort it would have been to this lonely, suffering gentleman could he have passed the distance between him and the girl he loved, and stood invisible in one small chamber there! At that moment Cecy Morgan was kneeling beside her bed,

clutching the coverlet in her hands, and—thinking of him.

But a few minutes before she had seen Alfred Guerry, the man to whom she was engaged, and had now come to pray away the doubts that would torture her heart. Even then she was humiliated to think that she had failed to win his love. She thought that she loved Alfred Guerry, but—ah! that terrible doubt. It was too late now; her promise was given; he could not have loved her; and she would have made Alfred a good wife.

Could each have known the truth what suffering might have been spared. For a long time Stannard sat there thinking of her beauty, her grace, all the little ways she had that were so charming to him, and tried in vain to stifle the pain in his heart.

Again he wondered at his depression, and endeavored to account for it.

“Pshaw!” he muttered, rising from his chair, “why should I bother my head with thinking! What a puny thing is man’s reason—do what we may, the length of our tether is soon reached. Philip Sidney was right when he said that ‘Reason cannot show itself more reasonable than to leave reasoning on things above reason.’”

The air grew damp and heavy. A southerly wind was rising, which, sighing through the trees, made the night still more uncomfortable. Throwing away his cigar after one long puff, he paused to watch the parabola of light until it ended in a bed of garden violets, and shone like a glow-worm among the leaves.

He retired, but only to find his slumber broken and uneasy. A sense of impending ill hung heavy on his mind. Throughout the long night, it seemed

to him, he was rolling and tossing about, but near morning he was suddenly roused with a vague consciousness that somebody was calling him.

That it was not a dream he soon learned, for he sprang out of bed as he heard a sharp "halloa" at the gate, and a quick "rat-tat-tat" upon it with a stick.

Throwing up the window he saw through the darkness of the morning the dim outline of a man on horseback.

"What is it?" he called, quickly.

"Please go up to Echaconnee, sir. The old man is——"

"A gust of wind slammed the blind in his face, and he barely caught the word "doctor," as the horseman disappeared.

"That was Morgan's man," he mused, hurriedly throwing on his clothes; "it was Ogletree's voice—I wonder what is wrong on the hill?"

In less than half an hour he was galloping down the road. Passing the last patch of woods his horse shied, and on looking around he caught a mere glimpse of two men sinking down behind a fallen tree. In a second the names of Alfred Guerri and old Abner Hawks came into his mind. Was it really they? and at such an hour; in such a place? He turned his horse quickly into the wood, but although a few seconds only had passed there was no one behind the tree.

"It was a mistake," he said to himself; "and yet I never saw shadows seem more natural. I thought Alf would not be here at such an hour."

It was daybreak when he arrived at Morgan's house, but still dark and stormy. Riding up to the gate, he rapped loudly with his stick, and gave the

usual halloa. Half a dozen hounds came growling and barking down the yard, and amid the confusion a negro woman opened the door.

“What’s the matter?” Stannard called to her.

The yelping of the dogs prevented him from hearing her reply. Throwing the bridle rein over a post, he entered the yard, beating right and left among the hounds, while the negro laid about her vigorously.

Two negro men with rolling eyes and chattering teeth were by the hall door, but too much terrified to speak. Stannard pushed into the hall, into the room to the left, from which he heard cries and moans, but his steps were arrested on the threshold. He started back with horror at the dreadful sight which met his gaze.

Lying upon the bed shouting or talking incoherently, and wildly swinging his arms about, was old Morgan, his ghastly face covered with blood, his hands gashed and bleeding.

With a quick glance Stannard took in the details of the room, observing many signs of a struggle. One window was broken, the chairs were in confusion, the inner door hung by one hinge, while spots of blood were plentiful about the floor.

Squatted in the corners were the house-servants, wailing loudly; and at the foot of the bed kneeled the old man’s daughter, Cecilia—a girl of one-and-twenty, and of uncommon beauty.

Stannard was shocked at her appearance. For one moment she raised her head, but there was no look of recognition in her eyes, while her face wore an expression that startled him. With clasped hands he turned to her for an explanation; but turning her head slowly she again fixed her eyes upon her

father. Now and then she caught her breath quickly as she saw the old man clutch at his wounds, staining himself still more deeply with the blood.

"Oh, Cecy! for Heaven's sake tell me—tell me, Cecy! Who has done this—this——"

He paused abruptly as he saw that she neither moved her head nor heard the words, but continued to look vacantly upon her father's face. Seeing the terrified condition of all present, he stepped to the bedside and caught one of the flying hands.

"Why, Morgan!" he said, holding fast to the hand, "what is the matter with you? Be quiet a moment, won't you?"

At the sound of his voice, Morgan ceased struggling and turned his head a little on one side, as if trying to catch the tone again.

"Don't you know me, Morgan? Speak to me. Look up a little."

Slowly the wounded man opened his eyes, but it was some time before he seemed to be conscious. Stannard spoke again:

"My dear old friend! Do look at me a minute. Don't you know me?"

The wild eyes turned full upon him now, and a look of recognition was apparent. With a few convulsive pushes Morgan bared his breast, displaying a mass of bloody wounds.

"See—boy—see, my boy——"

He gurgled out the words, and looked at Stannard, who started back at the horrid sight.

"Good Heaven! Morgan! who has done this? Who could have done it?"

Grasping his throat with one hand and gasping for breath, the old man pointed to his daughter.

"She—my boy—she——"

A rush of blood choked him for a moment, and Stannard's eyes followed the gaunt and trembling finger. Miss Morgan had raised her head and was watching intently.

"With the utmost difficulty the old man managed to get out the words:

"She has been my death."

Stannard could no longer listen to this incoherent talk, for with a wail of despair Miss Morgan fell heavily upon the floor. Springing to assist her, he pushed violently against Doctor Trippe, who had entered the room unheard, and was a silent witness of the scene.

Stannard raised the poor girl in his arms and bore her from the room. Leaving her with the house girls to loosen her dress, after seeing that she had revived a little, he returned to find the doctor examining the wounds on Morgan's chest. A glance told him that life was extinct.

"A bad business," said Trippe, without raising his head.

"Horrible! horrible!" Stannard replied, throwing himself down upon a lounge. A feeling of faintness seemed to come over him, and in a state of semi-consciousness he watched the physician as he probed and measured the wounds, recording the result in his note-book.

At length Trippe turned from his work.

"A sad case, Stannard," he said, stroking his long, black beard; "a sad case; but I feared it some time ago."

"It is, indeed, doctor; but I cannot—I will not believe it."

Trippe turned his eyes down upon him inquiringly.

"Believe what, Stannard? Of what are you speaking?"

"You heard what he said. I can never believe that she—that Miss Morgan——"

The sentence was not completed, for Stannard sprang to his feet and looked toward the door. Trippe turned also, and there before them, looking like a ghost or a marble statue, stood Cecilia Morgan, accused of murder.

With open eyes which seemed to look through them rather than at them, and the steady gaze of a somnambulist, Miss Morgan turned to the doctor and gently passed her hand across her forehead.

"Will he die, doctor? Will he die? Oh! doctor, please tell me?"

"My dear Miss Morgan, this is no place for you now—come, let me help you back."

"But doctor, I want very much to know, for I have a particular—a particular——"

Once more she passed her hand slowly across her brow, a gesture that was inexpressibly painful to the men before her.

"Doctor!" she continued, "do tell me—I've a very particular reason for wishing to know the truth."

"Poor girl!" said Trippe, in an undertone, "the shock has been too much for her. Her mind is wandering."

They took her, gently by the arms, and, half supporting her, walked toward the door; but she saw the body, covered over with the sheet, and knew the worst. With a touching cry she sank unconscious at their feet.

Once more Stannard carried her out in his arms, and, leaving the doctor by her side, ran for water. Crowding about the doors were the plantation

negroes, uttering their peculiar wail—as terrible as that of the Greek weepers, while down on the hearth, almost in the ashes, the house-girl crouched like a frightened hare.

“Get up, girl,” he said to her; “get some water for your mistress.”

At the first touch she rolled over and over into the middle of the floor.

“Get up, I say,” he repeated, sharply; and hearing a command, the girl sprang to her feet, frightened and trembling.

“Get some water for Miss Cecy—quick now.”

She turned to obey, but in the wrong direction, running violently against the table. Stannard saw that the girl was bewildered, and spoke still more sternly; but his words had a contrary effect from that intended, for her legs gave way beneath her, and she tumbled upon the floor.

“Never mind, girl,” he said, gently, “go back to your corner, but don’t get in the fire.”

He stooped to assist her, but with a few hitches she reached the fire-place, rolling up into a ball, and covering her head completely.

Stannard pushed back the coals, and as he rose, a bowl of water was handed him. With it he ran to Miss Morgan’s bedside, and was about to sprinkle the calm, white face before him, when he was stopped by the doctor.

“Never mind that now,” he cried; “she’s reviving a little.”

Trippe took up a small sponge wet with ammonia, and again patted it under her nostrils. With a short, convulsive gasp Cecy opened her eyes, a sweet smile passing across her face, then closed them slowly and wearily.

"She'll sleep some time, I fancy," said Trippe, while he and Stannard were leaving the room.

Once more they stood over Morgan's body. The doctor took out his note-book.

"I want to explain to you," Trippe began, "that all Morgan said——"

A step interrupted the explanation whatever it was, and both turned to see Ogletree, the overseer.

"I came in to see if I could help you any," he said, apologetically.

"I don't know as you can, just now," the doctor answered, thoughtfully. "Have you sent for any one?"

"Not directly, doctor; but I saw one of Carrol's boys and told him an accident had happened at our house. I didn't like to tell him the truth about it."

"You were right. On second thought, I believe you'd better send for some one. Simmons must be notified—he'll have to hold an inquest, you know; and you might——"

A noise at the gate stopped the doctor's remark, and Stannard walked to the window.

"Who is that?"

"Raborn, I think it is," Stannard replied, "and here comes Carrol. Bad news travels fast in the country, doctor, however it does it. I don't think it will be necessary to send."

"Perhaps not," Trippe answered, thoughtfully. "On the whole, Ogletree, I think you had better ride over and see Simmons. Ask him to stop at my house when he comes by."

Ogletree went out, showing the new comers into the dining-room. Stannard joined them and was endeavoring to answer their questions when Trippe broke in upon the story.

"Carrol!" said he, quickly, "do you know if Simmons is at home?"

"Yes, sir; that is he was yesterday. He'll hear of this, I reckon, without sending. One of his boys has a wife at my place, and when he went home this morning told me he seen you riding by at the crack of day. I suspicioned that Morgan was sick, so rid over and—"—

Trippe turned his back to cut short an interminable story, and stood stroking his beard for a moment, then went back to the fatal room. Stannard was again beginning to tell all he knew, when the doctor called him.

"Oh, Stannard! One moment, please."

Trippe was bending over the body at this time, the fingers of his left hand in a gaping wound, the note-book in his right, and holding a pencil in his teeth.

"I forgot to give you a word of caution," he said, removing the pencil. "There is no curbing gossip, and we must say nothing about——"

A nod toward the opposite chamber completed the remark.

Stannard understood him.

"By no means, doctor. Thanks! I was going to say the same to you."

"I only feared an inadvertent remark, which a word of caution would prevent."

Stannard went back to complete the story of the murder. That Morgan's last words were anything but insane ravings he did not believe; but he did believe that his good old friend had been foully murdered by some miscreant who broke in at the window, and hence he now joined heartily in the indignation of his neighbors.

Despite the hard character that old Morgan had borne in the settlement, he had been a second father to Stannard, and he now deeply lamented his dreadful death.

One by one the neighbors began to come in. A few women arrived, and at once took possession of the house. Stannard left them all to their gossip, and going into the fatal room, sat down by the fire. Presently, Trippe touched him gently.

"I'm obliged to go back for a time," the doctor said; "I was attending Roper's wife, and had been up all night when Olgetree met me. I have to go back there now—you can stay?"

"Yes—that is, I'll ride home for a few moments and come back."

"Don't be long, Stannard, if you can help it. We must see to Miss Morgan, you know."

The peculiar emphasis gave Stannard to understand that the doctor meant something more than attention to personal wants.

"Of course we must," he answered, absently, nodding his head, "of course—of course."

"She's better now—that is, I can't say she's better exactly, but she has recovered from her swoon. Keep the negroes quiet and we'll fix it all right."

"Yes; we'll fix it all right," said Stannard, warmly, grasping the doctor's hand.

Trippe smiled at his manner of seeing it.

"We'll fix it—all right! all right!" he repeated in the same tone, fancying that the smile referred to the secret between them.

"I believe he's wandering too," Trippe said to himself, as he crossed the room to where a group of men were talking. They opened a fire of ques-

tions upon him. "We'll fix the inquest at two o'clock."

"Suppose you make it twelve o'clock if it's all the same to you," Carrol suggested.

"Very good; say twelve then. I said two because I wanted to take a bit of sleep meanwhile; but no matter."

"Is the settlement unhealthy, doctor?"

"By no means, Carrol—on the contrary, it is uncommonly healthy. I was up with Roper's wife—she has a fine boy."

"Thus it is," mused Stannard, as he sat with folded arms by the smoldering fire. "Thus it is that the young come on the stage and the old step from it. This very idea should make us think how small we are and how little we know compared with what there is to be known."

"As large as this world of ours is, we play our parts in a very small drama. Who can tell the future of this young actor? Who can tell whether he will be a mere supe—like thousands around us—like those men standing yonder; whether he will play the part of clown, of pantaloon, or harlequin; whether he will wear cap and bells in comedy or carnival; or play in some high tragedy, and end his career like that old man lying there."

While musing of life in this disconnected and rambling manner Trippe had left. Starting after him, Stannard reached the door in time to see the doctor mount his thoroughbred, which gave two or three spirited bounds, then struck out into a swinging gallop.

"That horse is too wild for a doctor—even a heavy-weight like Trippe," he said to himself, as he turned back to give a few directions; but he had

been forestalled in this and went out to his own horse.

Down the hill, along the muddy bottom, across the bit of corduroy leading to the bridge, he slowly rode, checking his horse still more as he came to the bridge itself.

"The creek must be rising," he thought, as he noticed the little pools around the cypress roots; and, turning his horse to the right as he came to the stream, Stannard looked over to see how high the water had already risen.

As he did so he started back with horror; for down there, some four feet below, his feet in the water, and his body lying across a cotton-wood log, was Doctor Trippe.

It was the work of a moment to spring down from the bridge and raise the doctor's head. His first impulse was to feel for the heart. He could detect no throb there. Raising the unconscious head a little more he rejoiced to feel a faint motion, and presently a dull, slow beating of the heart. Stannard could not repress a cry of joy.

There was yet hope. For the first time he now discovered a deep cut above the right temple. The clotted blood and matted hair had formed a compress over the wound; but a few drops of dark blood oozed out upon his breast.

Stannard turned the helpless head, saw a long scratch or bruise along the cheek where it had grazed the log. Whether the deeper cut was caused by the fall, or was the cause of the fall, he could not even conjecture.

Pulling the body from the water, Stannard wrapped his two coats about it, and rode back to Echaconnee for help.

Two men were standing upon the porch, and ran out to meet him, alarmed at his disordered condition.

"For Heaven's sake, colonel, what is the matter?"

"Are you hurt?"

"Come quick!" he answered both, "get some of the boys, and come on at once!"

"But what is it? Blood!" said one, pointing to his shirt-front. "Are you hurt, colonel?"

"No, no, not me—Trippe is murdered!"

"Murdered!" exclaimed both in a voice, springing away quickly enough now to give the alarm.

"Come quick!" Stannard called after them. "Come to the creek. We may save him yet!"

The hope of saving him made them fly now, and in five minutes a large party of whites and blacks were running down the road.

Stannard was again bending over the body when they came up, and gathered round in silence.

"I found him so," Stannard began, pointing to the position, "his feet over there in the water, and his head down upon that knot."

"His horse may have shied and throw'd him. Thar's no signs of a fight here."

"Probably you are right, Barton; wonder what could have started him there?"

"Anything or nothing. The devil's in that beast anyway. Aiken, thar, heered me tell the doctor ony t'other day that that horse would be the death of him. Don't you remember, Ira, what I said?"

"Yes; you said you knew him of old, and——"

"And I told him about the brute's throwing a man agin the curbstone in Macon, killin' him 's dead 's a door-nail."

"Broke his neck short off," muttered Aiken, in response.

"Come, come, boys!" Stannard interrupted, "bear a hand now, and let's get the doctor to my house. Take him up gently, now."

They came around, slowly and reverently, and stood above the body.

"You'll have to use my coats for a litter until I can ride home for blankets. Easy, easy with him."

Stannard knew that Trippe was insensible to pain, but it hurt him to see the helpless head roll from side to side, and he threw up both hands as it struck the log heavily.

"Take care there, Dick, what the duse are you about. Mind what you are doing," he said, in no gentle tone.

At length Trippe's body was in the road, and they were fixing him upon the coats for a litter. Stannard was watching eagerly unaware how he was shaking with cold. A boy touched his shoulder, and on looking around Stannard saw him shift off his warm but well-patched coat.

"Take it, Mars' William. Do take it," the boy pleaded, as Stannard pushed it back. "Do take it; I can stand de cold better'n you kin."

"No, no, Aleck; keep your coat. Put it on again. I can do very well."

"Please take it, marster—I can't bear to see you so."

The boy's earnest face touched him then, and he saw that a refusal might be misunderstood.

"It is better to have any amount of bodily pain than to have one's feelings hurt," Stannard said to himself, as he took the coat; "but then I fear this

boy has not those finer feelings. He means to do me a kindness."

Stannard saw the body in motion, then rode home to rouse his own servants. Collecting a few blankets he sent a boy back with them.

"And there," he said, stopping the boy until he could pull a pair of heavy blankets from his own bed, "take these to Aleck."

Stannard was ever a kind man to his negroes—to any negroes, in fact, and was more considerate about their feelings than about the feelings of many white men who assumed to be his equals.

"These poor fellows have to work hard enough," he was accustomed to say, "and are entitled to my consideration. They help to make my money, and I am not only bound to provide for them, but to respect their feelings."

Such sentiments were not generally popular among the small farmers; but he was a rich man, and no one dared question his views.

It was easier work with strong blankets for a litter, and in a short time Trippe was lying in bed. They poured a few spoonfuls of brandy down his throat, and had the satisfaction of finding that his heart beat all the stronger for the stimulant.

"We'll take some ourselves, presently," Stannard said, "but first let us think about getting a doctor. His wife must be sent for too. Barton, where can we send?"

"Macon's nighest; but the train has just gone up. You might catch the down train for Fort Valley."

"That's true. Barely time for it, though," he answered, looking at his watch. "I'll send for Doctor Pierce."

Hastily writing the notes, two boys were sent off on these errands.

Breakfast was ordered and the negroes sent to the kitchen.

Aleck lingered behind the rest.

"Well?" Stannard interrogated.

"Here's your blankets, marster," the boy said, extending them.

For the first time Stannard remembered that he wore the boy's coat, and promptly took it off.

"Thank you, Aleck; you did me a service."

Aleck took the coat, but still held out the blankets.

"Keep them; keep them, Aleck. You shall have them for being so thoughtful and kind. You see one loses nothing by being so, Aleck."

A look of pride passed over the boy's face, but he appeared to leave reluctantly. Stannard was lost in thought, and stood stroking his mustache when the boy again spoke.

"Mars' William, I'd rather you wouldn't give 'm to me for that."

"Tut, tut, Aleck, why not? You earned them fairly. Remember that one never loses by being kind to others."

"I want to be that, marster, without losses or gains."

Stannard looked up in surprise.

"My boy," he said, kindly, "you rebuke me justly, and I beg your pardon for uttering an unworthy sentiment. Take the blankets, Aleck, for the lesson you have given me; and if ever you need a friend come to me."

Puzzled a little, and a good deal alarmed at his own boldness, Aleck went out quickly.

"Who would have thought he was such a casuist,"

Stannard said to himself. "He surprised me, really. He has shown me how true is the saying that nobleness of soul may often be found with an uncomely body. There's real stuff in that boy—pity there's not more of it in those men drinking yonder."

He looked at them scornfully, but still went in to them.

"You must make yourselves at home, and call for what you want. I cannot stay with you, but will meet you at the inquest. Excuse me, please."

He went into the room where Trippe was lying, relieving the servant who was watching him. Throwing himself into an easy-chair, Stannard tried to go over the events of this dreadful morning; but he could think of nothing but Cecy Morgan, and heartily wished the doctor, or the women would come.

Scarcely had the thought passed through his mind ere he was startled by a woman's shriek, and turned in time to see the doctor's wife throw herself upon the insensible body of her husband.

Stannard was deeply affected. It was some time before he could get her calm enough to listen to the story.

"Who could have done it," she sobbed, kissing again and again the limp hand in her own, already wet with her tears. "Who could have injured him?"

"It may have been an accident, you know," he said, with an effort at consolation. "I was but a few moments behind him, and saw no one. I thought I saw old Hawks early in the morning."

"Old Abner?" she asked, quickly, raising her head.

"Yes, I thought it was he, but may have been

mistaken. I got but a glimpse at daybreak; but then——”

“I had forgotten that old wretch. He has a grudge against my husband—I do not know for what, and has threatened him. The doctor always laughed at it.”

“We must not judge too hastily, Mrs. Trippe, for this may have been accidental. The truth will come out sooner or later.”

“Heaven grant that it may,” she said, with some force, looking as if she meditated revenge in case her husband died. But in a moment she raised her tearful eyes to his.

“What do you think of him, Colonel Stannard?”

“I can hardly tell,” he said, after a little hesitation.

“Tell me the truth, please—do you think—think he will—die?”

“I trust not; indeed, I hope not,” Stannard said, warmly, while tears came into his own eyes at the thought. “He seems a little better to me. Doctor Pierce will be here in an hour, and——”

“Not for an hour yet?” she asked, eagerly.

“No, he cannot get here until the noon train arrives. I will leave you now, and send Sarah in. Make the servants attend you; and don’t let those men annoy you with their tales.”

He saw that he could do no good, and that it was better to leave her alone. Turning to ask her something, he saw her cheek pressed close to her husband’s, while her whole frame was shaken by her sobs. Without a word he went into a gallery room, and threw himself into a chair. In vain he again tried to make a connected story of the events of this day.

A sleepless night, the hours of fatigue, the faintness that had more than once come over him, the confusion of ideas, and more than all his sorrow for Cecy, and sympathy with his friend, very nearly overcame him, and he had hard work to keep from dozing in his chair.

The last things that he remembered were, the weeping woman below, and the look of Cecy Morgan as she fainted by that dreadful bed; and with an indistinct fancy that it might seem inhumane for him to think of sleeping even, when Cecy was so ill, and his friend insensible so near him, he sank into an uneasy slumber. Nature could bear up no longer.

CHAPTER II.

O L D D A N M O R G A N .

Throughout the cotton States where the plantations are numerous, and where the houses are scarcely thick enough to be called a village, the name of "settlement" is frequent. This is generally preceded by the name of some large planter, some early settler, or the nearest stream.

Echaconnee Creek—the water of the bounding deer, as it was called in the euphonious Indian dialect—took its rise in the hilly, up-country, and, winding about through pleasant fields and swampy bottoms, finally poured its waters into the Flint.

Just where the Echaconnee ran still and deep, through cypress and magnolia swamps, there rose a bit of high land, upon which was Echaconnee, a large and valuable plantation.

Ever since the first settlement of the country by the whites, this vast estate had been the property of the Morgans, who, with the Bonds of the county above, had been known as the largest cotton planters in the State of Georgia. For many years, at the time of which we write, this had been owned by Daniel Morgan, the last male heir of this once large and wealthy family.

The house which stood near the brow of the hill, and overlooked the tree-tops in the valley for miles and miles, had been built in the earlier colonial days by a Morgan, who had left England with a large fortune, to become a planter in the New World. He had brought with him a number of

family portraits and other works of art, and had built a mansion that served not only as a residence, but as a fortification in time of danger.

During the Indian wars, it had been still further strengthened, but when peace came it was somewhat improved in appearance, but showed its earlier strength and solidity. For this reason it was called "The Castle," or at the time of which we are speaking, it was known as "Old Morgan's Castle," shortened to its former name in familiar conversation.

The plantation was a fine one indeed, and noted throughout the State for the fine quality of its cotton, and its large crops. Besides this, the place was universally remarked for the beauty of its grounds and gardens.

The large mansion, with its airy veranda, half-hidden by creeping vines, its broad hall, its large windows with Italian shades and blinds, its general air of comfort, merited more than a passing notice.

From the road it was partially concealed by a number of fine magnolias; while the well-tended garden, with its pastures of flowers, was barely visible through the thick althea bushes which formed a hedge.

The gate was broad, and from it a graveled walk, hemmed in by rows of box, and higher rows of rose-bushes led up to steps. On each side were beds of dahlias and violets inclosed in figures of evergreen shrubbery. Looking up this walk one saw into the broad hall, in which a number of pictures were hanging, with an enormous pair of elk's horns from which were suspended hunting equipments.

Behind "The Castle" was a cottage house for the overseer, and around it, arranged in the form of a quadrangle, were the negro cabins. Standing upon

the porch of the overseer's house one could see the door of each; and it was easy, therefore, to check the first symptoms of turbulence.

It is a rare thing to find a village of two hundred souls of any race or color, where there is not more or less quarreling; but generally this little colony was remarkably quiet. If disturbance arose between man and wife, it was instantly stopped, when Ogletree, the overseer, appeared at his door.

Though often stern when on duty, Ogletree was a kind-hearted man, and ruled by love rather than by the lash. He was often called upon as arbiter in quarrels, even with old master himself; and did not hesitate to decide against his employer if he thought him in the wrong. Old Morgan would curse furiously for a time, and make all manner of threats, but it generally ended in his making some present to Ogletree's family, thereby showing that, while he would not acknowledge himself in error, he respected the man for his sturdy honesty.

"Old Dan Morgan," as he was universally called, was a man of more than sixty years of age, tall, haggard, and stooping, showing in every feature the effects of long years of dissipation.

If not exactly crazy, he was not considered sound in mind.

"He's as mad as a march hare," the neighbors were accustomed to remark; but they exaggerated his peculiarities, and would not see that long habit had more to do with his madness than anything else. From youth up he had been given to the most dreadful bursts of passion. In his cups he was simply intolerable. And when a fit of horrors had given him a warning to stop drinking, he grew dark and moody, seldom speaking to any human being,

save one. Rough, boisterous, and passionate as he was, old Morgan doted on his daughter Cecy, and was loving and tender, at most times, to her; yet from long indulgence his passions had become almost uncontrollable, and even with her he sometimes gave way to the most fearful ravings.

Such was the character that old Dan Morgan had borne in the Echaconnee settlement; and he seemed to grow worse from year to year. Especially terrible was he to children, who had heard the home gossip about him—he was their *bete noir*, the bogey with which thoughtless mothers frightened the rebellious children into submission.

“If you don’t keep still and go to sleep, old Morgan will catch you!” was a common threat, and as efficacious as common.

At the very sound of his name the little things would catch their breath, and hiding their heads under the sheet, remain perfectly still until sleep took away their young fears.

And although men could not say that they were afraid of him, they did not care to provoke his anger, and so kept clear of the old bear unless business demanded that they should meet him.

Yet, there was a bright side to his character. If he cursed and abused a poor man, he was apt to do him a service sooner or later; if he exacted every dollar of his rents with the utmost promptness, he was very likely to return a part of it in wood, corn, or the free use of his cotton-gin.

Hence, it was that he came to be regarded as a madman utterly, but a good man enough when you got on the right side of him. But one thing roused his passion instantly. If one came to ask something of him for the support of preaching, he flew into the

wildest rage, and if the unfortunate man were not ordered from his grounds, with threats of being torn by dogs, he had to listen to an abuse of all preachers and preaching, that fairly made his hair stand on end.

For this well-known peculiarity, the country gossip assigned a reason. When a young man of five-and-twenty, Morgan had fallen in love with a beautiful girl, and was paying his addresses to her. Knowing his dreadful temper and dissipated habits, her parents were opposed to the match, and did all that they could to turn her mind against him.

For a time she wavered between her parents and her lover. Unluckily for Morgan, he made his proposal when half drunk and was refused. She gave him her reasons for rejecting him. The shock sobered him. Morgan promised faithfully to drink no more and pleaded earnestly with her.

"Try me, Mattie," he entreated her; "just give me a trial and see if I do not love you well enough to keep my word."

Again she wavered. What girl ever yet failed to be flattered by thinking that a man's fate is in her own hands, and that she has his life to make or mar?

She finally acceded to his request and promised to be his wife if he could come that day, twelve months, and honestly say that he had drank no liquor. For eight months Morgan kept his pledge, but at the end of that time Mattie Allen was engaged to Daniel Guerry, the young and handsome preacher who had just come upon that circuit.

Morgan was wild in his rage, and threatened to shoot the preacher, who had, he thought, so cruelly wronged him; but ere the new couple returned his

anger had died away, or had settled into an intense hatred for the whole race of preachers.

Two or three times Guerry tried to make friends with Morgan, and each time came near a personal collision with him. But though hating him, Morgan still cherished his love for Mattie Allen. Guerry came to live in the Echaconnee settlement, where he preached every other Sunday, and where a large family grew up. But they were very poor. From several persons Morgan learned the struggles of his old love, and more than once he secretly sent her large sums of money. It was not until many years later that she found out the anonymous donor.

Until upward of forty, Morgan lived in his castle entirely alone, but finally married a pretty-faced country girl, the daughter of a poor farmer in the neighborhood.

It was no small thing for this humble girl to marry so wealthy a planter as Morgan, and she felt that the dower of beauty which she brought him was but a poor return for the honor he had done her. Whatever her husband might be to others, he was kind to her for the first few months of their wedded life, and had provided liberally for all her family.

But her happiness was of short duration. In less than a year Morgan had taken to drink again, and all the wild passions of his youth returned.

With hopeful resignation the meek woman bore with him, but despair grew upon her as his cruelty increased. Time and time again he had struck her in his drunken fits, and as often had she forgiven him for it. She made no confidantes in her sorrow, but buried all in the depths of her heavy heart.

Even when about to become a mother Morgan had struck her a cruel blow across her still hand-

some face; and when she appealed to him for the sake of her child, he grew still more furious, and pushing her violently from the house, bade her go bear her child in a manger.

The poor woman crept into a negro cabin and remained through the night, waking in a high fever.

Morgan sought her early, and with a tenderness that equaled his previous drunken fury, took her in his own arms to her bed. She forgave him gladly, but the shock was too much for her at that time.

During the night she gave birth to a daughter, and before morning was a corpse. With her last words she had blessed the man who had been the cause of her death.

Near the last she called him to her side and thanked him for all that he had done for her. Old Morgan sobbed bitterly by her side.

"You were good to me once, Daniel. Oh, so good to me; and I love you for it now. It was not you that beat me, darling—it was that demon made by drink. Think of me sometimes, Daniel, and try to stop it now—won't you try?"

She drew his head down upon her breast, and went on before he had time to utter the pledge that was on his lips. She did not want him to promise.

"And our little girl—husband, you will be kind to her!"

"Yes, yes!" Morgan sobbed, "I will, as long as I live."

"And I want her called by my name. Call her Cecilia after me—husband?—be kind—be kind to her—our child."

She clung to his neck until death had relaxed her hold, and left him a remorseful solitary man.

For some time after the death of his wife Morgan

seemed to have amended his life; but he continued to drink hard, and was always morose and petulant. He loved his child with passionate devotion. As Cecilia grew up Morgan provided for her liberally, and bade her governess spare no amount of money on her education.

At fifteen she was sent to Europe with the Stannards, his nearest neighbors across the creek, whose son William had been several years abroad, and had just returned to take charge of the estate.

From this time until his daughter was nineteen, Morgan lived alone in his narrow world, his sole pleasures being in the long and charming letters which Cecilia wrote him from Paris, and in the society of his favorite, William Stannard.

Four years passed when news came that Mr. Stannard had died abroad, and that Mrs. Stannard, with her daughter Louise and Cecy Morgan were to return at once. It was with a beating heart that Cecy, now an elegant and accomplished young lady, drove up to the dear old castle once more, and flew into the arms of her father.

Morgan was now happier than he had ever been in his life. He gave Cecy the utmost liberty in renovating the house and the long neglected gardens, and permitted her to lay out the grounds anew, and regardless of cost. In a few months the castle and grounds were greatly improved in appearance.

Busily engaged in this work Cecy made few calls, and gave small encouragement to the women around to visit her, though ever kind and courteous when they came.

But she was much with the Stannards, riding over to their place nearly every afternoon to spend

an hour to two with Louise, now a young woman of nearly twenty-five.

Cecy found William Stannard much changed from what he was when she went away, and was often inclined to resent his distant manner toward her. He was too scrupulously polite and respectful for one who had known her in youth, and toward one so intimate with his family as she had been.

"He might treat me with more cordiality," she thought, "even if he cannot love me. My intimacy with his mother and sister ought to make him do that."

She little knew the real feelings of his heart—as little understood why it was that he seemed to repulse her growing fondness for him.

Piqued at last by his studied politeness and courtesy, she began to visit less at his house; but before her absence was really observed to be voluntary, Mrs. Stannard and Louise had determined to spend the winter with a relative in New Orleans.

Cecy wept bitterly when she heard the news, for now she would be cut off from him entirely, and could never even see him unless he chose to call on her. But she concealed her grief as she went to see her friends off, and came back with a void in her heart that she had never felt before.

Although she did not know it then, the parting of that day was a long one; for during the winter Louise was married, and in the early spring Mrs. Stannard died.

William Stannard now lived alone in the home which had become his own, and although he often called on Cecy, he never seemed cordial to her. There was a restraint about him for which she vainly tried to assign a reason. He was too formal

for a friend, even; and though she had given up the hope that he might learn to love her, she could not understand his present coolness.

One day he drove over to the castle, and had spent some hours with her. They had been engaged in a game of chess, but he asked her for some music and she sat down at the piano.

It gave her a strange thrill as she saw his eyes fastened upon her; but she could not comprehend the sadness that hung in them. She knew that she was very fair.

"He will thaw a little toward me now; I'm sure he will," she thought, as she moved away from the piano, and saw the look of admiration that he gave her.

He arose to go immediately.

"He turns away as if he were afraid of me," she said to herself, as she followed him to the door. "I will know the reason for it."

"Good-evening, Miss Morgan!"

"Miss Morgan," she repeated, tauntingly. "Since when have I become such a stranger to you, Colonel Stannard?"

"A stranger!" he said, in surprise. "No, no, Cecy—shall I call you so? You are not—you do not—you can never——"

He stammered and hesitated, his face growing deathly white. She was frightened at his look and manner, and in her surprise lost the last word of his incoherent sentence.

She repeated his good-night mechanically, and, rushing to her room, sank down upon her couch and wept bitterly.

"I see it all now," she mused, as she sat there with her hands pressed tightly over her heart. "I

see it all—he loves another, and is afraid that I shall love him.”

Great tears were trickling down her cheeks, and her heart was throbbing painfully as she thought that it was some lady, more beautiful than she, whom he had met abroad.

“I was but a child when he went away; but I had feelings even then,” she said, almost savagely. “He may not have known it, but——”

Her thoughts wandered back to that happy past, and for some moments she thought over the simple story of her life.

“Have I no pride?” she exclaimed, presently, springing to her feet; but in an instant she sank back upon the couch, and burying her face in her hands, gave way to her tears.

CHAPTER III.

THE MEETING WITH ALFRED GUERRY.

For some months after the departure of her friends, Miss Morgan was much alone, and time began to drag heavily upon her. She longed for companionship, for sympathy, for love.

Stannard seldom came to the castle now, and since that evening they had never been alone together. This confirmed Cecy's opinion of him, and with the usual contradictory character of woman, she now longed to gain his confidence so that she could sympathize with him, and console him in the absence of the woman he loved.

Cecy wished to talk of her. She wished to speak of her to him; to show him that she could do so calmly and cheerfully; to ask him if she were beautiful and good.

"She must be," Cecy said to herself, as she revolved these things in her mind; "I know she must be both to have won his love. How I should like to see her."

The castle seemed dreary enough to her now, and to while away the time, she made frequent visits to Macon, often bringing back some friends to spend a few days with her.

On one of these visits she saw Alfred Guerry—son of the Echaconnee preacher—who, having graduated in law, had just put out his sign in Macon. Cecy had never heard the story of her father's disappointment, nor had he ever mentioned the Guerrys in her presence. Though somewhat ac-

quainted with the family, and on speaking terms with his sisters when they met in the settlement, Cecy had never before met Alfred Guerry; but she had often heard his name mentioned.

Accompanied by a friend, she had gone into a store to purchase some books when the young lawyer entered. With that sudden feeling which so often rises in the hearts of men and women who feel that they can like each other, the two had looked long and earnestly until both dropped their eyes, abashed at their own boldness.

Guerry turned to the opposite counter, bowing to Cecy's companion as he passed the girls. More than once she stole glances at his fine-looking face, and once she felt her cheeks grow crimson as she met his eyes with her own.

It was some time before she could learn his name. It was a great surprise to her to learn that this was the young man of whom she had heard, and now that he was gone, she felt sorry that she had not looked at him more closely—as if she had not availed herself of every opportunity to study his countenance.

“He's a regular flirt, Cecy,” said her friend; “half a dozen girls are setting their caps for him.”

“Do you mean to say that he is a flirt because he does not marry them all?”

“Not exactly that; but—because he seems to like no one in particular.”

“I suppose he is waiting for the one that he can like,” Cecy said, as she followed her friend into the carriage.

“Do you blame him for that, Carrie?” she asked presently.

“Of course not; of course I don't blame him for

that, but, Cecy, I mean to say that—you know what I mean?

“I shouldn’t like to affirm that I did know; but I believe that I have some idea of it.”

Miss Morgan returned to Echaconnee, but with different feelings from those she had when she went away. Then the place seemed lonesome to her, but she could find relief in working about her garden; but now it was positively solitary. She could find no relief from the solitude that oppressed her, and spent whole hours by the window, with her cheek resting upon her hand, making pictures on space, and dreaming of the young lawyer.

She grew fretful and unhappy. In this mood she was ill able to bear the hasty temper of her father, who was now drinking again, and much broken down mentally and physically.

On one pretext and another she was often in the city, and at length accepted the invitation of her friend, Mrs. Bond, to spend a few weeks with her there. Cecy was happy at the very thought.

The young lawyer had made evening calls at this house, in company with friends, and evidently stood very well there; but Mrs. Bond had to tell Cecy that there were some unpleasant rumors about his character.

“Every young man has something of the kind said about him,” Cecy replied, “especially by those who are jealous of him.”

As Mrs. Bond could give nothing positive, she held her peace for some time, but was actively engaged in making inquiries.

Meanwhile the young man began to make his visits more frequent, and no one could fail to see that Cecy Morgan was his main attraction. Mrs.

Bond became annoyed, but could see no way of stopping the affair; and at length she was almost startled to hear that Guerry came as an accepted lover.

"Oh, Cecy!" cried Mrs. Bond, when she heard this; "have you thought of this matter well?"

"As well as I ever can, I presume."

"It is too serious a thing to be entered upon lightly, and it should be thought of long and seriously."

"They say that of everything. I never could see the good of thinking 'long and seriously' of a thing that can be settled in five minutes."

"But is marriage——"

"Not that, perhaps—I know what you would say," interrupted Cecy, impetuously, "but I have thought of this as much as I can. My father cannot live long, and I am the last of my family. I cannot live alone. The man that I—I—that my father wishes me to marry, does not love me——"

"But perhaps he may," said Mrs. Bond, quickly, eagerly catching at this straw.

"He loves another."

A tear gathered in her eye, as Miss Morgan softly repeated these words, and she turned away to hide it from her friend.

"You will be a rich woman, Cecy, and will not want for lovers. Be sure you are right in this before you bind yourself to him. Alfred Guerry is not all that I should wish for you; he is——"

"There! there! dear; don't tell me anything against him, for he has told me all himself. It is natural that the girls who have failed to catch him, should try to spread bad stories about him."

"I only hope you are right, Cecy," was Mrs.

Bond's reply, as she dropped the subject for the present.

That afternoon she ordered her carriage and made it a business to inquire into this young man's character. The result gave her still more cause for alarm. Guerry was represented as a passionate, toppish young fellow, who drank heavily at times, and who interpolated his ordinary speeches with curses. His companions were none of the best, it was hinted; and the tricky way that he had managed his first case at the bar, had injured him with the profession.

With a heavy heart she now went back to communicate her fears to Cecy; but before reaching her, she paused to think over what she had heard.

"I have nothing positive," she thought, "and Cecy will not heed mere rumors. She is headstrong, but the most honorable girl I ever saw. What can I tell her?"

Before this question was answered, Cecy came in, looking radiant and happy.

"Alfred has been here since——"

"Alfred!" repeated Mrs. Bond, feeling her heart sinking as she did so.

"Yes, Hattie, Alfred! You are surprised to hear me say that, but I suppose I shall always call him so now."

"Then it is——"

"Yes, dear, it is;" Cecy said this lightly, but in a moment her lip trembled, and, kneeling at the feet of her friend, she laid her head against the friendly breast.

"You must love him, too, Hattie. He is good—I know he is. When you know him better you will like him——"

"Yes, dear, for your sake."

Mrs. Bond knew that it was useless to say more, and for some time sat stroking Cecy's fair head, listening to her happy plans for the future.

That night she prayed earnestly that Alfred Guerry might be a better man than she had reason to believe he was.

Two weeks had passed since her betrothal, and Miss Morgan seemed very happy in her love; yet she had frequent fits of weeping, for which her friend could not account.

Gladly would she have stayed on in the city, but the accounts from her father were unfavorable, and she began to fear for his health. One day a letter came from Doctor Trippe, advising her immediate return.

Yet, despite her father's illness, Cecy had to confess that she left Macon with reluctance.

"It may be heartless," she said to herself, as she thought over the matter, "it may be heartless, and I fear that I should be the first one to call it so in another girl; but I cannot bear to go away—I am so—happy here—at least I think that I am," she mentally added, after a short pause.

The thought that half the girls in town believed that she ought to be happy had its influence upon Cecy's mind, and arguing upon it as her inevitable fate, she soon came to feel that she was, indeed, a happy and fortunate girl.

For all her reluctance, Cecy made her preparations for departure. The last evening came all too soon, and Alfred Guerry had come to say farewell.

In his presence she was truly happy, and every care fled from her mind.

"Good-by, Cecy," he said, rising; "it is late, and

I must go. Good-by, my dear girl; it will not be for long?"

"Oh, no, no! it must not be for long? Don't say good-by, but *au revoir*—Alfred, I must see you soon."

She said it so fondly that it made his heart full. Whatever his errors he loved this fair girl truly and well; and had the course of true love run smooth, he might, perhaps, have made a better man. His loose life was a thing of the past now, he thought, and his true life would begin with the present.

Taking both of her hands in his own, he held her away from him, and looked long upon her sweet, bright face, now lighted with some happy radiance.

As he gazed down into the depths of her tender eyes his own softened with love; and permitting them to wander over her glossy hair, her ripe, red lips, and fair skin, he felt supremely happy in the thought that she was all his own.

"Why am I so blessed?" he asked, as, loth to leave, he again drew her to a seat upon the sofa.

"Why?" she repeated, archly, turning her head coquettishly on one side.

"Yes, Cecy, why? You know that my profession is all that I have in the world. I have nothing besides. Can you bear poverty with me?"

"Poverty, Alfred? Do you not love me? To a lonely girl there is greater wealth in that than money can buy. Some time I shall have enough for us both, Alfred. Till then your love is all I ask."

He looked at her still more fondly, and bending toward her pressed a kiss upon her fair white brow.

"People may speak ill of me——"

"I will not believe them."

"They may say things that will be hard for you to hear; but, my darling, whatever I may have done in the past, I shall redeem in the present. A lifetime of devotion could not cancel the debt that I have in your love."

"Don't say that; pray don't talk to me so. It frightens me."

"I must tell you, Cecy. I must tell you now, and let my actions speak hereafter. I have been a little wild, perhaps, but malicious tongues have maligned my errors. From this time my better life begins."

Honest words they were, and as he spoke them the young man believed in them truly. He had been trained according to the strict religious code of the Puritans, and when away from home had gone into excesses from the novelty of the temptations that surrounded him.

"My boyish life was hard, harsh—it was cruel," he once said to a pious man who endeavored to remonstrate with him for his sins. "I had no youth—literally, no youth, and I am going to take it now."

He thought of this as he sat there beside the woman who had pledged her life to him; he thought of all his errors, his petty meanness, that had been almost a necessity to him; and he thought of his crime. A deathly paleness came over his face as he recalled this word, and he started as if stung by a serpent. His mind flew with lightning rapidity over that past, and he felt relieved as he thought that nearly all traces of this act must now be lost, and that he could begin a better life.

He spoke honestly therefore when he uttered these words to the woman he loved.

Again he rose to go.

"Let me come to you soon, darling?" he said, holding her hand.

"Oh, very soon. I will tell my father at once, so you can come to me at home. How happy I shall be in the dear old castle with you there?"

The good-by was finally uttered, and with a reluctant step Alfred Guerry went away from the one woman in the world who had the power to soften his heart. Cecy went to her chamber, but not to sleep. For more than an hour she sat by the open window, dreaming of what might have been had the world gone fair with her, and of what must be now.

"And I do love him," she said to herself, "I'm sure that I do. Heaven grant that he may not be long away from me."

Fond girl! she little dreamed of the days of sorrow that were to come from the very love that she was now trying to cherish in her heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONFESSION—A SHOT FROM THE SWAMP.

Bidding adieu to her friends in Macon, Miss Morgan rode the seventeen miles home in a state of reverie.

In all her life she had never experienced the sensations which came upon her then. Nearly two years had now passed since her return with the Stannards; and for the past twelve months, at least, her home life had been far from pleasant.

Drinking heavily again, her father had suffered from his excesses, and already mania-a-potu had twice warned him that his life or reason was in danger. Even to her he had grown cross and irritable.

Cecy bore with him patiently until she became really love-sick—as most men and women do at some period of their lives—and grew fretful and irritable herself. She had gone away feeling that her father's temper was hard to bear; she returned feeling that she could bear anything and be cheerful.

The marked contrast surprised even herself.

"I am a child—a very child," she thought; "and though it may seem silly in me to say it, and do not feel that I shall ever be unhappy again. At least I hope I may not," she added mentally, as a doubt came into her mind.

Often, as she rode along, these thoughts came up; often she pressed her hands over her heart to see if

it did really beat the same now that it had a lord and master.

It was sweet, indeed, to this lovely girl to feel that she did belong heart and soul to him; and she now gave her allegiance freely.

Taking his photograph from her sack, she gazed upon it, turning it this way and that to see if she could catch the expression that she had last seen upon his face.

"I will always obey him," she told herself; and then she wondered how other women could really cavil at the word "obey" any more than at the words "love" and "honor." Again and again she ran over the all important formula in the book of Common Prayer, and called herself a foolish girl for doing so.

She had given herself wholly and utterly to this lord of her heart, feeling no reserve now, knowing no will but his; but yet, she trembled at the very thought of one name.

"How fond papa must be of him," she mused; and Cecy's hand, still holding the picture, fell upon her lap, and she gazed out across the white cotton fields, and over the dark line of pines beyond.

So happy had she been on this homeward drive that she almost regretted her arrival; but the carriage was now at the gate, and springing out, she tripped lightly up the walk. Still her mind wandered back to the city.

"He will soon walk up here with me on his arm," she told herself, as, just glancing at her favorite flowers, she sprang up the steps.

With a flushed and beaming face she came upon the porch to meet Doctor Trippe as he came from the hall. For a moment the bright color forsook

her face, as she realized the probable import of his visit.

"Is my father worse? she asked, quickly, forgetting to return the doctor's greeting.

"No worse, perhaps, than he has been for some days. I did not want to alarm you, Miss Morgan, by writing you just how he was; but I thought that you ought to be at home."

"Indeed I ought, doctor," she said, feeling remorse for her own selfishness in remaining away so long. "My place is here; and I thank you for sending for me."

"I don't know that you can do much good here; but I think it is best that you should be at home. Besides, I may have a proposition to make to you. At any rate, I preferred telling you what I think of him to writing it. I'm glad you came in as you did; I was about to leave."

"Doctor, what do you think of him? Tell me quick, please."

She caught her breath as she uttered these words, and her heaving bosom told Doctor Trippe that she was alarmed at his remark.

"There is no danger just now," he said, to quiet her fears. "Let us sit down here a moment: I want to explain to you before you go in. The truth is, Miss Morgan, that I find some things about him to-day which I do not like. I'm afraid he will never be himself again."

"I fear not. He has been breaking down fast since early in the summer." Cecy's voice trembled as she said this.

"You mistake me a little—I do not mean physically, but mentally. Unless we can do something for him, he will soon be hopelessly insane."

Cecy threw up both hands in surprise, and it was with a cry that she asked:

"Oh, doctor! can you do something for that? can I do anything?"

"I will do all I can——"

"I am sure you will," she interrupted, quickly; "I know you will, doctor. I did not mean it exactly as you think. Could we not keep him from drink?"

"My dear Miss Morgan, that's the very thing we must not keep him from. His system requires stimulants. It would be better if we could get him to drink only with his meals—to sip his brandy and water when eating, and leave it at other times. That is my only hope. He is too weak to travel. We must try to keep him quiet, to avoid all excitement. Humor him, Miss Morgan, and you may have no trouble; a sudden passion may upset him entirely. A great deal now depends upon the exciting cause which shall give his mania a vicious turn or the reverse. You'd better go in now; but I must tell you that there is a great change in him. Good-by."

"How is Mrs. Trippe, and the children?" Cecy asked, as she extended her hand. "You must excuse me, doctor, but I have been so selfish over my own trouble that I forgot to inquire before."

"We are all very well, thank you. I dare say Mrs. Trippe will drive over in the morning."

"I hope she will; please tell her so from me."

"Thanks! By the by, if your father gets worse don't fail to send for me. Send Ogletree over at once."

Trippe turned in the walk to say this, but again started on. "If he does I'll send him off to Milledge-

ville at once," he mused, as he passed out of the gate and mounted his horse.

Old Morgan was sitting in an easy-chair when his daughter entered, and her appearance seemed to give him no more surprise than if she had been but a few moments away.

He bore her affectionate greetings passively, then pushed her from him, kindly but wearily. Cecy was shocked, despite the doctor's warning, to find so great a change in him. His wild, restless eyes, thin face and gray beard, long unshorn, gave him a grizzled and haggard appearance. Trembling dreadfully whenever he moved them, his gaunt fingers were constantly engaged in picking at the wrapper in which he was enveloped, or pointing to spots on the floor.

Great tears gathered in Cecy's eyes and slowly rolled down her cheeks, as she gazed upon his face and thought what a wreck he had become. She turned away to hide her feelings.

Her own senses confirmed all that Doctor Trippe had told her, and though her father talked naturally enough now, she felt that his intellect was tottering on the very verge of an abyss, over which it might be plunged at any time.

Ten days passed during which time Morgan began to improve. Impatient and irritable, he proved a great trial to those around him; yet even the servants were patient and attentive.

"He's my old marster, anyway," they were accustomed to remark when speaking of him, "he nused me from a child;" and so they put off the other negroes who wondered how they could bear with his temper.

Cecy never wearied in attending to his comfort.

When he was able to walk about a little she felt that she could bear her secret no longer; and besides she was already pining for her lover.

"If I could only see him just one hour in the week," she argued to herself, "papa might make a slave of me all the rest of the time."

So she resolved to tell him. In the evening he came in from a few minutes' walk in the grounds, and sat down at the tea-table—neat and tasty as it ever was when arranged by Cecy's hands—talking to her wearily of William Stannard, who had just left him.

"If I only knew how to begin," Cecy thought, "I could tell him easy enough. It must make him happy, too. I'm sure he can't help thinking what will become of me when he is gone; and he must be glad to know it."

The pronoun "it" could have but one reference for her now. At length her resolution was made. Stealing up behind her father's chair, Cecy pressed her lips upon his gray hair, and threw her arms around his neck. As she came round to kneel before him he looked down tenderly, and endeavored to stroke her hair; but his shaking hands annoyed him, and he withdrew it with a frown.

"Papa!" she said, at last, "I want to tell you something."

"What is it, my dear?"

"I want to tell you that—that——" The words stuck in her throat as she realized the difficulty of saying what she wished. "I want to tell you—papa, would you like to see me married?"

"Yes, dear, very much," he answered her, fixing his mind upon Stannard, and smiling, as he thought it had come at last.

His words and smile encouraged her, but it was not without hesitation that she asked the second question.

"Papa! do you know Alfred Guerry?"

"What, of Macon? That rascally young lawyer?"

"Yes, sir—of Macon."

"I should think I did," he replied, pettishly. "I know the whole lot of them. What do you know about him?"

"He has—that is—papa, I love him."

The words were out at last, and with a face crimsoned with confusion, she looked up for his approval.

For a moment Morgan did not speak, but the corners of his mouth twitched convulsively, and an angry scowl gathered on his brow. Her heart sank as she saw him about to burst into a passion; but suddenly checking himself, a look of tenderness came into his eyes, and he drew her head down upon his breast.

"No, no, Cecy!" he said, with a trembling voice. "Dear Cecy, don't tell me that! don't say that! You must not think of him!"

Again he endeavored to stroke her hair as he held her head against his breast; but she raised her head to look into his eyes.

"But, papa, I can't help doing it now."

"You must help it," he answered, angrily.

"It's too late. He loves me, papa, and I have promised——"

"Promised, girl!" he interrupted, fiercely. "You promised to be his wife? You never shall; mark that. None of his family shall ever set foot in my house."

"Oh, papa! do you know anything against him?"

"I know enough against him. He is the son of a

rascally preacher. I never knew one of them yet who turned out well."

"Father! don't say that. It is wicked. You are wrong, believe me. I am sure he is good; and you know his father is a good and holy man."

"Holy thief! holy hypocrite! I know him. I've known him for five-and-twenty years, ever since—since——"

For a moment old Morgan's mind wandered away from his daughter, and he thought of the young girl who would have been his had not this man come between him and her.

"Confound him!" he muttered, presently, between his teeth. "I'll have nothing to do with any of them."

His voice was now raised to a high key, and his frame was violently shaking with subdued passion.

With another curse he gave Cecy a push as he sprang to his feet, overturning the tea-table with its load of delicate china. For a long time he paced up and down the hall, swinging his arms, stamping, screaming and cursing at the Guerrys.

Cecy sat, as if stunned, where she had partially risen from the floor, until the old mamma came to her. With caressing words the faithful servant led her young mistress from the room, and came back to gather up the china wrecks—china which Cecy had sent home from Paris two years before.

For some time Cecy lay upon the sofa weeping and trying to find some reason for her father's anger, and she resolved, come what might, that she would not give him up until some good reason was shown for deeming him unworthy.

"I challenge them to do it. I dare them to find one thing against him. I know they cannot,"

Her use of the pronoun was here somewhat illogical, but she naturally felt that all the world—all of her narrow world at least—was against her. She had implicit confidence in the character of her lover.

Despite the little fit of indignation and attempt to be brave in which this was said, she broke down completely, and wept bitterly over the first great sorrow of her life.

Her eyes were still sad with weeping, on the following morning, when Doctor Trippe came in. She met him on the porch.

"I am glad you have come, doctor; my father is in a terrible state."

"What has excited him?"

"I cannot tell you all," Cecy said, after a moment's hesitation; "but he was angry with me—I can tell you so much."

"Was it this morning?"

"Oh, no, it was yesterday evening. The livelong night, doctor, I heard him walking about his room, cursing and raving to himself, now and then striking the table with his fists. Two or three times I crept in to see if I could calm him; but I was frightened."

"Could you not humor him, Miss Morgan? I can guess the difficulty, partially—would it not be better to promise him anything for the present?"

For a time she hesitated and seemed to think the matter over; but with a sad smile she turned to the doctor, and told him that it was impossible.

"I cannot, doctor, I wish that I could, but I cannot."

"Never mind, I appreciate your scruples, and per-

haps you are right. Men and women are different about such things. I will see him now."

Old Morgan was still raving when Trippe entered his room, and began at once to curse the Guerrys. In vain the doctor tried to calm him.

"I see it all now," he thought, "she has met Alf Guerry. I hope she'll not marry that puppy—he can't raise a beard," and Trippe stroked the luxuriant growth upon his own bronzed face complacently, as he listened to Morgan's story.

It took not long to glean the facts from Morgan's disconnected words, and he saw that what he feared had come, and that Morgan's mind was now beyond control. Still there seemed to be a method in his madness, and the doctor resolved to wait a few days before taking the responsibility of sending him to the asylum, to see if the mania would not pass away.

At least he determined not to delay matters so long as Morgan did not appear vicious; and he now had another reason for wishing Morgan at home provided he could be safely kept there. He was shocked to think that this elegant girl was about to throw herself away upon one whom he considered a worthless, if not a dissolute man, and he wished to gain some time in which he hoped that Alf Guerry would show his true colors. Feeling sure that Miss Morgan's wealth was all that he sought, Trippe wished to save her, and determined to consult with Stannard about it, on his way home.

Busily engaged in revolving this matter in his mind, Trippe had reined in his horse, but on reaching the bottom by the swamp let him out in a gallop.

At that instant he felt a scratch across his breast,

as the report of a rifle rung upon his ears, and turning his eyes quickly he caught a glimpse of a man sinking down behind a fallen tree.

CHAPTER V.

WILLIAM STANNARD'S STORY.

Frightened by the report of the rifle, Doctor Trippe's horse swerved, and started off in a run. As strong as he was, Trippe could not check the thoroughbred that he rode until the animal had clattered across the long bridge, and struck into the heavy, sandy soil beyond.

He dismounted there, tying his horse to the fence, and examined his own breast where the bullet had struck him. Entering the lapel of his coat, the ball had ranged along the surface of his body, raising a huge welt for some inches.

Although quickly carried away from the spot, the doctor caught a passing glimpse of the would-be assassin, and recognized in him the form of old Abner Hawks.

"A close shot, my friend," he said, looking back at the swamp; "a close chance this time; but there's no bullet in your pouch that can kill me. My good friend Abner, you and I will have a long settlement one of these days."

He mounted and rode on to Stannard's house. The latter came out as the doctor halted at the gate, and together the two men walked into the library. Hardly had the door closed before Stannard discovered the hole in the doctor's clothes.

"Great Heaven, Trippe! what is that?"

The doctor hesitated. He had not remembered to

hide the shot, but was not yet ready to explain the circumstances. Without explaining fully why old Hawks had a feud against him, Trippe could not tell the story; and hitherto he had kept that secret because it implicated a young man who was as yet unsuspected of any crimes, and saved the happiness of a woman. He knew that old Hawks would kill him if he could do so without detection; but for all that he dreaded to ruin the prospects of a young man just starting in life, who might never again become a criminal.

At this time, he felt that he could not keep the secret much longer, but with his usual generous spirit determined to keep it as a last resort.

Stannard repeated his question.

"Excuse me; I was thinking about it. You see I had a narrow chance there."

"Who in the world could have shot you, Trippe?"

"An accident, my dear fellow, an accident. You don't suppose any one would shoot me purposely, do you?"

"Indeed, I'm glad to hear it."

"Glad! Why it came very near putting my pipe out!" said Trippe, with a laugh.

"Oh! I didn't mean that you know; I'm glad to think that no one tried to shoot you."

"Some fellow squirrel-hunting, I imagine, who came near bagging a doctor instead of his game. Come, Stannard, do the hospitable—I feel uncommonly like taking a glass of brandy and water."

For the first time, Trippe began to suffer from the shot, and felt a passing faintness. The stimulant revived him. "I wanted to see you about the Morgans," the doctor began. "I have just come from the castle, and left old Dan in a terrible state. He

is raving about the Guerrys; can you think why?"

"Yes—I fancy he's thinking of that old affair. My father told me about it."

"Do you know of no other reason?"

"None that I can think of now. Why, Trippe? You seem to make some mystery about it."

"It's as plain as A B C. Miss Morgan is engaged to Alf Guerry, and——"

"Heavens! Trippe!" exclaimed Stannard, springing from his seat; "you must be mistaken."

"I heard it from them both. My dear fellow, what is the matter?"

Stannard's face had grown deathly white, and at the doctor's last words he sank back into his chair, burying his face in his hands.

"Does she love him," asked Stannard, hoarsely.

"Heaven forbid. He is unworthy of her, but I fear that she does care for him."

Stannard covered his face again and groaned as if in agony. His very heartstrings seemed wrung, and his chest heaved convulsively.

What sight is there more touching than that of a strong man in his agony? Trippe understood the matter now, and saw the terrible mistake that he had made. Reaching across the table he took one of Stannard's hands.

"Pardon me, my dear friend, I was wrong to speak to you."

"No; no, Trippe, you were right. It is a shock to me, I confess—let me think a moment."

The doctor sat in silence looking at the suffering man before him, and longed to offer some consolation.

"My friend! I know your secret now—I understand the cause of your emotion. I did suspect it

once before; but your treatment of Miss Morgan afterward convinced me that my suspicion was wrong. I'll not ask you the reason—unless you please to tell me—perhaps it is not yet too late.”

“Too late, Trippe; too late. She loves him. Miss Morgan is not one to engage herself without love.”

“Stannard! we must save her. I know that Alf Guerry is not worthy her love. I know him to be a bad man—or, I know that he has been. I cannot trust him; and am well satisfied that with a little delay we can show him up to her.”

“If she loves him, Trippe, that would only bring sorrow upon her.”

“Better that than life-long misery when married to a criminal.”

“A criminal!” exclaimed Stannard, in surprise; “you don’t mean to say that Alf Guerry——”

“I spoke hastily,” corrected Trippe, as he saw to what this was leading; “I spoke too quickly; but I must say that I have a very poor opinion of that young fellow. If I can help it, he shall never marry that noble girl.”

“You are prejudiced against him, Trippe,” said Stannard, generously defending his rival. “Alf has been wild, perhaps, but no more so than the rest of us. I can’t say that he is a man that I like particularly——”

“I should think not,” interrupted the doctor.

“Don’t be too hard on the young fellow. He does very well now, I hear, and this marriage may be the making of him. I must say that I know no harm of him, really.”

Doctor Trippe sat stroking his beard, and looking with surprise at his friend. He knew some harm of young Guerry, but the time had not yet come to

reveal it; and he now sat thinking of his friend's generous nature.

"Stannard!" he said, presently, "a moment ago I said that I should not ask your secret, but I have changed my mind. You need not answer me if you do not wish to tell it—but I want to know why you did not propose to Miss Morgan yourself?"

For some time Stannard did not speak, but sat with folded arms and downcast eyes, as if his mind was wandering through the past.

"Tell me that it is a secret, and I'll say no more," Trippe continued; "but I wish to be a friend to you, and to—to Miss Morgan."

"You are a true friend, doctor—a true friend. I want to ask one favor of you—if this matter is decided on, don't try to prevent it—rather let us help them."

"Stannard, you lived too late—you belong to the age of chivalry. Don't try to stop me, I am speaking from my heart. I'll promise you this; unless I can show him to be utterly unworthy of her—unless I can prove to you that she would be taking upon herself a life of misery, I will do as you wish."

"Thanks, Trippe, you are a good fellow. Let us help them if we can."

The doctor had a mental reservation with his remark; but it answered for the present, since he knew that he could prove his assertions in the end.

"Sit over here, doctor, and I will tell you my story. It is a painful subject to me, and has never passed my lips before. It is a secret, remember——"

"I shall remember that it is your secret."

"I do not fear for you. I was going to say that it is a secret that I have kept even from my own family."

"You remember when my father first sent me abroad? You know what kind of a boy I was. It was hard to be left at that age alone in a strange land, and without one true friend to advise me.

"My father was liberal—too liberal with me, and I had not a want that was unsupplied. The temptations of Paris were too much for me, and for a time I plunged into all of the wild dissipations of that gay city. I was a scamp, I admit it; but I can truly say that I never yet wronged a living man willingly—never injured a person unintentionally that I did not make ample reparation."

"I am sure of that, Stannard," interposed the doctor. "Do you remember what Sir Brooke Fossbrooke says? 'There is great promise in a young fellow,' he remarks, 'when he can be a scamp and a man of honor; when dissipations do not degrade, and excesses do not corrupt a man, there is a grand nature beneath?' I do know your character well."

"You flatter me; but I repeat that I never willingly injured a human being. My money was spent freely, but it was shared by all my friends—or those who pretended to be so.

"I have since found out, Trippe, that a man may be too kind—too soft-hearted. I have found this out to my sorrow, for my fear of wronging one led me to bear as great an imposition as was ever put upon a boy.

"During one of our vacations I went to Switzerland for a tour, taking with me two friends who had long shared my purse. At Geneva one of these men—devils let me call them—wished to introduce me to his sister, who was, he said, at one of the pensionats—a school-girl, who had been there for some years.

“He took me to see Adela, his reputed sister, and, boy as I was, I thought her charming. Her freedom surprised me at times, but I thought it the freak of a school-girl who had been closely kept from the world.

“One evening we were speaking of a ball that was to be given on the following night, and Adela expressed a desire to go. I thought it a capital thing to assist her in escaping from school walls, and that night dreamed of the pleasure that I should have in seeing the surprise of this girl, when introduced into a new world.

“Remember, Trippe, I was only nineteen then. During the day, these good friends of mine had taken me to a dinner, where we drank freely, and I was well under the influence of wine when I went to meet Adela. We went to the ball. My older companions led me on to drink still more, and when I declined, they insisted upon one more glass, and I yielded to them.

“They had drugged my wine. I had a faint recollection of going back to the ball-room, of seeing everything in confusion about me, of falling on the floor, while a crowd gathered around.

“When I came to my senses again it was evening of the following day. I felt faint and sore, and was trying to collect my thoughts, when Adela’s brother came into my room.

“He pretended great solicitude for me, and called me his brother. Presently he asked me when the wedding was to be. I asked for an explanation, and he told me that in my drunken fit of the night previous, I had torn the mask from Adela’s face, exposing her to the whole room, and that, when remonstrated with, I had called the people to wit-

ness that she was my betrothed, and that I had purposely released her from school in order to marry her.

"As soon as possible I went to see Adela, finding her at a cheap hotel in the outskirts of the city. She confirmed her brother's story, and said that I had ruined her forever; for she had been expelled from the school after the exposure that I had caused. With tears and prayers she knelt at my feet, praying that I would not let her be ruined and disgraced.

"Trippe! you will think me a fool for what I did, but think how young I was at the time. I really believed that I had been the cause of all this, and my heart was deeply touched by Adela's distress.

"But one thing troubled me at the time. I knew that Adela's appearance would be acceptable to my parents, and I thought her an innocent girl. But, Trippe, I thought even then of little Cecy Morgan, a mere baby.

"I married Adela at once. My friend, this subject becomes painful to me—excuse me for a moment."

Two or three times Stannard paced up and down the room, the doctor sitting in silence. Suppressing his emotion with a strong, manly effort, Stannard continued:

"Let me pass lightly over the rest of this dreadful story. The wedding was strictly private, according to Adela's wish, no witnesses being present but her brother, my friend! Heavens, Trippe, how could men make so great a mockery of the sacred name of friendship as did this brother and his friend, whose expenses I was paying?

"One week passed, and we were making preparations to leave Geneva, when I one day came upon Adela unawares in the garden of the house where

we were staying. I came up softly, intending to surprise her, when I heard another voice answering hers. Looking through the shrubbery I saw her brother at her feet.

"I was about to spring forward to welcome them both, when I heard angry words and stopped to listen. Trippe! should I live a hundred years, I shall never forget that moment."

Covering his face with both hands, Stannard sank into his chair, and bowed his head upon the table.

"Trippe!" said he, raising his head again and speaking with compressed lips, "I learned there that Adela was not his sister; that my two friends were gamblers; that she had followed us down from Paris, and had not been in a pensionat at all; and that I had been a dupe.

"Let me cut this story short. I came forward and charged them with this great wrong. The assumed brother acknowledged that the plan had been made for the purpose of getting my money, but openly defied me. I challenged him.

"The coward would have fled from me, but I pursued him, and forced him to meet me in Baden. I shot him through the head.

"At his death the conspiracy broke down, but Adela was legally my wife.

"On my sister's account I would not make a scandal by revealing all this in a divorce court, but agreed to Adela's request to give her a certain sum of money. For this she agreed never to bear my name, or to hint in any way that she had ever met me.

"Life had lost all charm to me then. I went to Bonn, and, living in seclusion, completed my studies. I came back in time to go to Mexico with General

Taylor. Of my wounds and services there you know. On my return my family went abroad, taking Miss Morgan with them. The death of my parents and the marriage of my sister have been too recent to need remark.

“Trippe, my friend, I have already answered your question—I have given you the sad record of my life, but I must tell you more—I must tell you how hard this is upon me. How hard that, because duped when a young, confiding boy, my whole life is to be shipwrecked. Bear with me a moment.”

Again he paced the room for a few moments, his countenance showing how great was the pain attending these recollections. He paused abruptly and continued:

“It was the one hope left to that poor old man that we—that his daughter should become my wife, and thus unite these two estates. The last male of the Morgans, he feared that Cecy might fall into bad hands, and the old place ruined, if not sold for gold that would be squandered.

“Morgan as the people knew him and Morgan at our house were two very different men. With us he was a courteous, cultivated gentleman. He was a second father to me. How well I remember the day I left home. Cecy was a mere child, but our families had agreed that we should marry. Morgan came to bid me good-by, and went with me to Savannah, so loth was he to let me go away from him. He seemed to regard me as his heir. When we parted, he slipped a well-filled purse into my pocket.

“‘My boy,’ said he, ‘if ever you get in trouble—if ever you exceed your allowance, write to me privately. Study hard, and come home soon. At

my death you shall have a little wife and all my property.'

"The poor old man wept bitterly, as if I had been his own son. I wrote to him often, but never for money. On my return he tried to scold me for this, and showed me a bill of exchange for a large sum, which he kept ready by him to send to me. Trippe, I am almost afraid to tell you the amount—it was for five thousand dollars. This will show you how much he loved me. He insisted upon my taking the money then, but I declined, and until I came into all of this property here, he was trying to press money upon me.

"Do you wonder that I loved him, Trippe? Do you wonder that I curse myself for having blasted his hopes? I am a coward before him, and even now—although I feel mean in doing it—I try to keep up his delusion. It would kill him to tell him the truth.

"A few words more and I have done. You saw what a beautiful girl she was when she returned with my mother? How could I see her without loving her.

"I did love her, fondly. I soon found that I could not meet her daily as I then did; I could not trust myself. Trippe, the temptation was too great. I could not offer her my hand; and I could not admit even the possibility of winning her love. I don't know that she would have cared for me; but I could not run the risk. I treated her coldly. Trippe, it nearly broke my heart to do so; but I did—I did.

"My friend, you have my secret now. All hope is gone. Life has lost its pleasures to me, and I must live here, a lonely man, and see her married to

another. I hope it will not be while her father lives. Speak to her, Trippe. I will see Guerry. Let us delay it for that poor old man's sake; but when he shall no longer be here to suffer from it, I would give all my wealth to make her happy.

"I will tell you what I shall do. He has nothing. If she—if she loves him—pardon my weakness, Trippe—if she loves him, and marries him, I will give him a deed of my estate in Crawford County, on condition that he settles the Morgan place on her and her children."

Stannard threw himself back into his chair, his face the very picture of suffering despair, with the blue veins standing out like cords. Trippe poured out a glass of brandy for him.

"Drink it, Stannard, drink it," he said, as the latter made a gesture of refusal; "you are suffering. Stannard, you are the noblest fellow that I ever met."

"Oh, Trippe! don't talk in that way. I have no one to give money to but her. Louise has married a wealthy man, and why should I not use my wealth to give happiness to the woman that I love?"

"Have you ever heard from——"

"My wife! You feared to say the words. No; I do not even know that she is alive. Twelve months ago I sent abroad to make inquiries about her, but have not heard as yet. She must have kept her word, and I dare say is now married to another."

"Perhaps——"

"Don't try to give me false hopes, I beg you. I could not bear it again. It is too late."

Trippe said no more, but would not give up his hope. He determined to delay the marriage, even

if Morgan's health should improve, and he should consent.

"I will spare him if I can, for the sake of his father," Trippe said to himself; "but if the worst comes to worst then I must expose his—his—an ugly word that! For her sake, though, I must stop this marriage."

CHAPTER VI.

OLD HAWKS PAYS A VISIT TO ALFRED GUERRY.

It is needless to record the painful scenes that occurred at the castle during the next two weeks. Old Morgan grew worse daily, failed perceptibly, and gave way to frequent bursts of passion that were terrible. Stannard alone had the power to calm him, and he was often at the castle, avoiding Cecy as much as possible. Indeed, he dared not meet her.

Although wandering upon nearly every other subject, and perfectly insane upon this one, the idea was still strong in Morgan's mind that he could force his daughter to give up Guerry and marry Stannard.

The sad shipwreck of the latter's life was unknown to him, and Morgan determined to bring the matter about, and thought of it, and dreamed of it, until it became the ruling idea of his mania—in fact, it was the exciting cause of his present condition.

Doctor Trippe alone was aware of this—or of the extent to which his mind was affected by it—and he had remained silent so long as Morgan could be treated at home. At the first malicious act he had made up his mind to send him to the asylum.

At length he began to fear for Miss Morgan's safety, and spoke to her about it; but she would not listen to the plan, and was so positive that Trippe was forced to yield to her wishes—or for the time refrained from pressing the subject.

Occasionally the old man had lucid intervals, but a word with Cecy brought back the delirium, and he raved for hours thereafter. These scenes, growing of more frequent occurrence, were very wearing upon her. She grew thin and pale, frequently giving way to fits of despair; yet she believed she was doing right, and fervently prayed that Heaven might give her strength to endure.

One morning Cecy had walked out on the veranda, and was standing with her fingers interlocked before her, looking out upon her neglected garden, when her father tottered out of his room.

Leaning heavily upon his stick, Morgan walked slowly, and with feeble steps, toward the spot where she was standing. With a bright smile, Cecy sprang forward to aid him, and caressingly begged him to lean upon her arm. He repulsed her harshly, and angrily asked her if she would do as he had asked her.

"Papa! don't be cross to me; I cannot bear it. Tell me what you wish me to do?"

She said this tenderly, but her voice trembled, and she had hard work to keep back her tears.

"I told you the other day," he screamed back to her. "I have told you often—I want you to give up that cursed—I can't bear the sound of his name—I want you to marry Stannard."

"But how can I—how can I marry Colonel Stannard. He does not love me."

"It is easy enough to make him if you will try."

"Oh, papa! don't say that! How could I do such a thing; and besides, he loves another."

"I don't believe it! I know better. The trouble is that you have got your silly head turned, and won't try to do as you ought. To think that my

only child should wish to marry a sneak of a Guerry!"

For the first time she raised herself to her full height, and dropping her pleading tone, spoke firmly:

"You must not say such things of him; I cannot listen to them."

Again she bowed her head imploringly.

"Papa! I beg you not to speak ill of him—not until you have seen him. You do not know how good and true he is, nor how much he loves me."

"Seen him? seen him? I'll see him and his whole family hanged first."

"Oh, papa! listen to me—just one moment. Do hear me——" she begged piteously before him, her eyes streaming with tears, and her hands raised to his face. She saw that his passion was gaining the mastery; and he clutched his stick as if he would strike her dead at his feet.

"Hear me, my father—tell me one good reason why I should not love him; show me that he is unworthy, and I will obey you; but unless you can do that I must not break my promise to him."

He muttered curses over her as she continued to implore him.

"He loves me so much, papa; and I shall be left in the world alone—do not, oh, do not destroy my only hope of happiness in life. For my mother's sake——"

He broke in upon her as she uttered that name, and, perfectly furious now, raised his stick above her head.

She sprang to her feet, and grasping the cane, tore it from his hand, standing like a tigress at bay.

"You used to beat her, I have been told; but you shall never strike me."

She spoke with a vigor and boldness that he had never heard in a woman before, and he started back, thoroughly cowed, as she took a step toward him. She held the stick in her right hand, partially behind her, while her left was raised to keep him back.

"You would murder your father—your old father, for the sake of your lover," he said, with a piteous whine.

She was about to throw down the stick and fall at his feet, when, close behind them, they heard a step on the graveled walk, and Ogletree, the overseer, came on the porch.

Dropping the stick, she appealed to him for aid, and Morgan, now completely exhausted, was led passively to his room. There he sat in his arm-chair for hours after, mumbling incoherently and picking about with his bony fingers, in the manner peculiar to men with this kind of delirium.

This was but one of the many scenes during that fortnight, each wearing more and more upon Cecy, and upon her father as well. Yet, would she not tell them to the doctor, for fear he would insist upon sending her father away. She was patient through it all, and watched him, and tended him with a devotion that was touching.

Meantime, her letters to Alfred Guerry, though frequent, detailed but little of her home sorrow. She would not worry him with her troubles. Yet she had to tell him that her father opposed the match, and now and then related the opposition that was brought to bear upon her.

One evening, Doctor Trippe found Morgan worse

than usual and felt that the time had come for him to say a few words to her.

"Miss Morgan," he began, as they passed into the hall together, "can I have a few words of private conversation with you?"

"Certainly, doctor. Let us sit out here."

She led the way to a rustic sofa upon the veranda.

"Pardon me, Miss Morgan, if I speak plainly, but I must say that your opposition to him is rapidly killing your father."

Without a word, she bowed her head and wept. All were against her. For a whim—a prejudice, her father would not let her marry the man to whom she was pledged, and the whole world, she said to herself, was against him.

The idea that he was being persecuted for her sake, came into her mind, and her generous nature rose at once to do battle in his defense. But was it true that she was really killing her father? For his sake then must she dissemble.

"Doctor, I am a lone girl, without a female relative in the world. Since my girlhood, I have had no one to advise me. In what I have done I feel that I am right; and tell me, doctor, tell me what I can do."

"Miss Morgan, I do not like Alfred Guerry, and I believe——"

"Doctor," she interrupted, "I cannot hear you speak ill of him. Speak of me—what can I do?"

"At least I can gain time," the doctor thought, "and in the end I can convince her, though she will not hear me now."

"I have already given you my advice," he said to her; "if you wish to keep your father alive you

must not oppose him in this matter. You are both very young yet, and can afford to wait."

"I will take your advice, doctor."

"Let me bring Mrs. Trippe over to-morrow, and tell her your trouble. Only a woman can sympathize with you, I know, but we doctors know more of the female heart than you imagine."

Trippe listened to her thanks for this suggestion, and rode away, feeling confident that she would keep her word, and that, for the present, there would be nothing to fear; but he had no hopes for Morgan's life or reason.

That very day Cecy wrote to her lover more freely of her position than she had ever done before, and told him that, for her father's sake, they must wait until there was some change in him. She did not despair, she wrote, of yet bringing him to an approval of their union; but until that time came she should have to dissemble, and to disguise the love that she would one day give him freely.

In reply to this, Guerry proposed an immediate marriage, urging that her father would become reconciled to the matter when he found that it was beyond recall.

Cecy was shocked at his words, but blinded to his faults, she attributed his haste to excessive love for her. "Poor fellow," she said, while reading his letter, "everybody seems against him because he is to marry me. Unless they can say something positive they need not speak to me of him. They can only hint—oh, how I hate such hints! They dare not speak outright, for they know that to speak at all would be to speak in his praise."

She was obliged to refuse his request, and again begged him to be patient for a time.

"Does she let that old idiot stand between her and me," he cried, in rage, as he read this letter, forgetting that the old man was her father.

"He shall not—I'll not let an old fool like that stand between me and fortune. Besides, I love her."

And he thought again and again of her beauty and her worth.

"It would make a man of me," he continued; "it would blot out forever my past life. With her wealth—with a girl like that, who could not be a good man."

He was holding the letter in his hand when the door opened, and an old man stalked into the room. It had grown dark as Guerry sat dreaming over Cecy's letter, and the twilight was fast fading; but even in this dim light the intruder was recognized.

"What, Hawks! is that you?"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised if it was, boss. Abner Hawks—that's me, eh?"

"Hawks, why do you come here—why do you bother me again? What do you want of me now?"

"Well, boss, I want a little of that fine whisky first, then I want some money."

"Oh, Heaven!" groaned the miserable young man. "It was only the other day that I gave you all I had."

"But you kin get more I reckon. Suppose you try the old game, if you can't squeeze the old man any more."

"Don't! don't! Hawks, you speak too loud. I'll do all I can for you, but I can't raise——"

"Oh, fudge! yes, you can. Take a nip with me?"

"How dare you come here to bully me in this

manner? Don't you know that I could hand you over at once?"

"But you won't though. Take a nip with a fellow, and don't be sulky. How about that gal, down thar?" asked Hawks, with a leer, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of Echaconnee.

"Hawks, I was reading a letter from her when you came in. Let me alone a little while longer, and I will give you money."

"How much longer? Let's read the letter."

The young man drew back from the extended hand, and a look of terror came into his face.

"I'll not show it to you."

"Oh, you won't, hey? Then something's up. You can't fool me, boss. How long does she make you wait?"

"Until the old man gets better, or dies."

"That's a long look ahead. He'll linger on that way for years yit. Crazy people never do die a natural death if they've got any money. Don't you know that? You're lawyer enough for that, ain't yer?"

Guerry started as he heard this, and with open eyes sat staring vacantly at the man before him. Old Hawks poured out another glass of whisky, and for a few moments permitted his poison to do its work.

"D'ye see," he said, at length, squinting through his glass of liquor. "They go off kinder sudden, you know; and the 'quest finds him guilty of lunacy in the first degree; an' they put him away, while the next o' kin gits the money—d'ye see?"

The portion was working, and old Hawks sat sipping his liquor with complacency.

"'Tween you'n me, old Morgan might happen to

die in that same way. One might's well be hung fer a sheep as for a lamb, d'ye see? If you're sure of the gal, it ud be a blessin' to the universe, ef he did die about next week. Then you could hurry up the cakes with a lone gal like her, d'ye see?"

Still Guerry sat in silence; but his cheek was pale, and his whole frame trembled violently.

"Business!" said Hawks, sententiously.

It was with a hoarse, unnatural voice that Guerry spoke; but he had not yet yielded to the demon, although his face showed how powerful the temptation had been.

"Hawks, why don't you go away from here and let me alone. I'll give you the money when the property is mine; what's the use of going any further."

"I want money now, d'ye see? I've got a little job of my own down thar, and the chances air it ud be too hot to hold me arter awhile. I want the cash ready. Business, boss."

With a painful effort Guerry brought out the words in reply to a remark of which he knew the meaning well, and he fell back into his chair as he uttered them.

"Hawks, how much do you want?"

"Two with three noughts on it. That's about the lowest figger. You do as I tell yer, and no job, no pay, d'ye see?"

Again he squinted through his glass at the trembling man before him, who sat in terror and thought of the bargain that was being made. Old Hawks gave him no time to retreat.

"Is't a trade?"

"Yes!" faint and feeble came from the lips of the

miserable young man, and, bowing his head upon the table, he hid his face in his hand.

"I'll take a bit of paper to that effect, if you please. I don't doubt you as a lawyer, in course not, but as a forger, I'd rayther have the I O U in my pocket, d'ye see?"

Guerry tried in vain to avoid this, but had to yield, and sat down to write at old Hawks' dictation. The latter folded the paper and put it in his pocket.

"Now for the cash in hand."

"Upon my honor, I swear to you that I have no money, Hawks! I don't know where to get it—indeed I do not."

"Suppose I tell ye—find another Widder Carter."

"Hush! for Heaven's sake, hush! Do you want to ruin me?"

Old Hawks laughed loudly, and facetiously chucked the suffering young man in the side with his thumb.

"Joke, you know. I'll tell you where to get the money; borrow it."

"From whom could I borrow it? You know that I cannot. You are trying to torture me, Hawks, and what's the use of doing that. I have borrowed and begged to give to you, and if my life depended on it, I could not raise any more."

"You air a chicken-hearted fellar," said old Hawks, sneeringly. "I s'pose if I tell you where you can borrow a pile, you'll have scruples agin it."

"I would get you the money if I could, Hawks; but nobody will lend it to me."

"Set down agin, and I'll tell you a story. 'Tother day I shot at some game of my own on the wing, and jest barked it. In course I follered up for an-

other shot, and accidentally got inter a man's garden. That man's one I wouldn't harm a hair on, but he wouldn't feel the loss of the little I want. I heard him a-telling a story thar, and he said suthing about a young feller who's gwine to marry his sweetheart, and wanted to help him along for her sake. D'ye see? Now you jist write a line to Colonel Stannard, and say you want five hundred to git weddin' fixin's."

"No! not him; I couldn't ask him, Hawks, I owe him already."

"Never you mind; jist write the letter, an' I'll come round this day week for the cash. I'll take another nip o' that good whisky, boss, and say good-night. Never you fear about the money; it 'ill come ur my name ain't Abner Hawks. Farewell, boss."

With a rapid jerk he had poured the liquor into his capacious throat, and, picking up his rifle from where he had placed it behind the door, old Hawks left the room.

Long after his departure, Guerry sat in the same spot, the very picture of misery and despair.

"Curse him," he muttered, between his teeth, "I wish that I dared to murder him. I thought that he would never dare to come here again. I believed that Doctor Trippe alone, of all near me, held this secret. He is too honorable to ruin me; but what have I to hope from this old reprobate. Oh, Heaven! it is too hard."

For more than an hour Guerry sat musing thus, and forgetting that he had but just now yielded to another and graver crime, argued himself into the belief that he was an ill-used man. He fancied that the whole world had combined to crush him.

Again he took Miss Morgan's letter, written

several days before, from his pocket; but he could not see to read it over. The faint starlight that entered the room fell upon a face which had grown haggard in an hour, and upon a trembling form that dared not stand upright. Conscious stricken as he was, Guerry strove to summon a fool-hardy courage to his aid, and endeavored to convince himself that, now the world was against him, he was justified in defending himself. He could not exactly make the two ends of his moral reasoning connect; but managed to pacify his burning conscience by thinking that he would make the end justify the means. Once give him the control of Miss Morgan's property, and he would become a better man; he would be liberal to the poor; he would be noted for his charity; he— The extent of his good resolutions cannot be told, for in his own mind they dwindled away into indistinct fancies.

Thus it is, promising his Maker to perform good works in the future, that many a man settles with conscience when willfully pursuing the path of crime!

Pouring out a glass of liquor, Guerry drank it off and turned to leave the office. "One good thing about it," he thought, as he turned his steps homeward, "after that he will never dare to remain."

CHAPTER VII.

ALFRED GUERRY'S PLOT — THE MEETING IN THE WOODS.

It was with a heavy heart, and a cheek burning with shame, that Alfred Guerry sat down to make an application to Colonel Stannard for pecuniary aid; but there seemed to be no way of escape for him, and he was obliged to perform the disagreeable task.

Morally, Guerry was a weak man. Dreading the exposure of an old crime, and thinking that old Hawks had it in his power to ruin him, the young man could not find courage to resist the first oppressions that were put upon him, by the hardened reprobate. He became a slave, and was even now following his taskmaster into other crimes.

For a certain sum, Hawks had agreed to go to California; and in order to raise this money Guerry had to win Miss Morgan's hand. Thus far his plans had worked well, but trouble was coming, and he felt that he must stop at nothing now which could aid him in accomplishing this end, and in securing to himself a future of peace and respectability.

More than once he had nearly made up his mind to tell Colonel Stannard his story, and to ask his aid; but at the last moment his courage failed, and he had come, finally, to think that it would be better for him to carry the thing through bravely, and enjoy the reward. It was his vanity that drove away the better feeling.

Had his better instincts prevailed—had he gone

then to the man who could have saved him, all might have been well; but he let the golden moment pass, and had now written for money to aid in the cause of crime.

Promptly came the answer to his letter. Stannard had written kindly—very kindly, although every word had been a dagger to his heart, as he thought of Cecy Morgan.

“I send you a check, Alf, for the sum you want, and if you need more do not fail to call on me. I want to see you. Come down to my place any day that will be most convenient to you. Let me know one train ahead, so that I may send my carriage for you. Doctor Trippe has told me of your engagement to Miss Morgan, and I should like to talk the matter over with you, if agreeable, with reference to the estate. You know that Morgan is hardly in his right mind, and I would speak to you as his nearest friend, and a well-wisher of both you and Miss Morgan. Come as soon as you can, Alf, and believe me, your friend,

“WILLIAM STANNARD.”

Guerry's letter had reached Stannard soon after his conversation with Trippe, and at a time when his heart was open to the young man. He wished to aid him for her sake.

The check had fallen on the floor while Guerry was reading this letter, and, without stooping to pick it up, he sat long with the letter in his hand, thinking of his course.

“I shall hate him—I know I shall,” Guerry said to himself. “I can't stand this much longer. Why does he have everything his own way in this world, while I am driven to all sorts of mean shifts to get along? He'll not have a chance to triumph over me long. I will marry her, let what will oppose me.”

Such a thought had never entered Stannard's head. On the contrary, he really envied Guerry, and would have given all that he had to have stood as Guerry did with Miss Morgan; but the young man had lost already the finer feelnigs of a gentleman, and had come to think, like too many poor young men, that any attempt to do him a favor was for the purpose of having a triumph over him, or for some personal end.

What Colonel Stannard could gain by lending him money was not quite clear even to him; but it is easy to believe what one wishes very much to believe, and he fancied that the conclusion was evident—Stannard must have some personal motive. One thing Guerry could not deny—that he felt a growing dislike to Stannard since this favor had been done.

Stooping for the check, Guerry thought for the first time of the use to which he must put it, and he cursed old Hawks for the necessity.

The time was near by when Hawks would come for the money, and to prevent another visit at his office, Guerry determined to take the money down to Echaconnee. Where old Hawks was to be found was a question that he could not answer. Common report located him in the Echaconnee swamp; but, so far as known, no man had yet seen his home.

Still another reason led the young man to visit the settlement. For more than a week he had received no letter from Cecy, and the reports that he had from her were anything but satisfactory. So he resolved to go home for a week, and see her in the meantime. He could not lose her now—to do so was ruin, ruin forever.

The day upon which Hawks was to visit him

came, and Guerry had not been able to find the old outlaw. Fearing to miss him the young man walked up the Macon road, and sat down to wait until Hawks should pass. But few moments had elapsed ere he heard a step in the bushes behind him, and looking over his shoulder saw old Hawks approaching.

"Why, Hawks, where in the world did you come from," said Guerry, springing to his feet, "I'd no idea you would be along so soon."

"Didn't expect me at all, did ye? I've had my eyes on ye ever since ye came this way. Ye kint fool me, boss."

"I didn't want to fool you. What had I to gain by doing so."

"There's sense in that, my boy; if there ain't, I'm a Dutchman. Where's the money?"

"Here it is, Hawks, I wish I had cut my throat before asking for it. It was downright dishonorable in me to take it from him."

"Highly-tighty, dishonorable, eh? Rather get it from poor widders, had ye?"

"What's the use of speaking of that old affair Hawks? That's gone and past long ago. Why can't you let it drop."

"Drop's the word then; but don't go to saying as it's dishonorable to borrow money from a man who always has his pockets stuffed full. If you play yer cards right you can make your fortin out'en him."

"It's no use talking about it—I will not borrow another dollar from him."

"Who said anything about borrowing? Suppose I make him give you a fortin outright what'll you give me?"

"You are talking nonsense now."

"Am I? My rule is, no job no pay—that's fair, ain't it?"

"Fair enough, I suppose," answered Guerry, sullenly. "I don't believe you know what you are talking about."

"Never you mind me—just tell me what you'll give."

The young man sat in silence for some moments, revolving the matter in his mind, and came to the conclusion that Hawks would not speak in that manner unless he had some reason. Money he must have, and it was well to have something to fall back on in case he failed to get the Morgan property.

"I wonder if that old devil has got some hold on Stannard, too," he thought, as he turned the matter over in his mind. "Hawks would not speak so positively unless he was sure of his man."

And he thought that it would be a fine thing if he could get the secret and use it for his own ends.

The old man did not allow him long for reflection.

"Come, boss, business!—how much will you give me?"

"What is the use of talking in this way?—why not ask me how much I'll give for an estate in the moon?"

"Very well, boss—have it your own way. Hurry up with that gal and you'll be rich enough, I reckon. I'd a made yer a richer man though ef you'd a-made it worth while."

The cunning old man knew well that his bait had taken, and turned the conversation into another channel.

Guerry was now more than ever anxious about it,

but hoped to get Stannard's secret into his possession.

"I'd like to know, Hawks, how you are going to make him give me anything. You are quizzing me?"

"I'll give you the offer just once more, boss, and ef you don't want to trade, I kin find a man who will. Now what'll you give me ef I make him give you the finest plantation in Crawford County?"

"Hawks! if you will give me the secret with it, I'll double the money."

"Who said anything about a secret?"

"I know you too well, Hawks. I can read you like a book. You could not make him do anything unless you had him in your power. It was you who made him lend me the money, to go into your pocket."

"If I had a secret of his'n do you suppose I'd give it to you?"

"You might sell it to me."

"P'raps I might ef you'd the cash in hand. This note business is too risky. You might make a receipt in full, or suthen of the kind, d'ye see?"

The young man looked up sullenly, but said no more. The time might come when he could buy this secret and have that haughty Stannard in his power; but for the present he must forego that pleasure. He now saw that Hawks was in earnest, and gladly treated on the latter's terms.

"Give me five thousand," said Hawks, "in gold, mind, no bank-notes, and I'll see that you have the fortin'. That's dog cheap for puttin' yer into two sich estates, with a wife in the bargain. You'll be the richest man in these parts."

"I'll give you that much, Hawks, for both."

"I must have it in writin' though. Here! write

down in pencil what I say, and bring the paper signed and sealed to-night."

The old man began to dictate, but was soon stopped by Guerry.

"What do you want that in for—do you want it for the purpose of ruining me? Suppose it should fall into other hands?"

"But it won't. Don't you see it ud hang me? Don't be a fool about it."

"For Heaven's sake take care of it, Hawks! When will you go away?"

"Just as soon as you get me the money. Perwidge that, boss, an' I take myself out o' sight forever, and won't leave a trace uv that old affair behind me, nuther."

"Trippe will be here."

"I don't reckon he'll stay long in these parts. It's ben gitting onhealthy for him lately—he kint stand that Echaconnee swamp. I reckon he'll leave about the time I do, d'ye see."

Alfred Guerry understood the meaning of these words, and could not repress a feeling of joy as he thought that this would leave him a free man, with no fear for that phantom which had been so long hovering over him. But he shuddered as he thought of the means by which his liberation was to be accomplished.

Trying to deceive himself with the idea that he was in no way responsible for what old Hawks did, he paid little attention to the latter's ordinary conversation, but was roused as the old man picked up his rifle and rose from the log upon which they had been sitting.

"Yer dreaming 'ain't yer?" asked Hawks, looking down with contempt upon the weak man before

him. "It's nigh onto sundown. Bring me the paper in an hour."

"Where shall I find you, Hawks?"

"Somewhar in the pines, on the right of the road. Can you hoot like an owl?"

"I'll try."

"Don't try ef you never did. Give us the night-hawk—it's easy enough. I sha'n't be fur off."

Guerry started homeward, but had gone but a few yards before his arm was roughly seized by old Hawks.

"Look a-here, boss—another word of very private conversation with you. Don't you go to being a fool. You'll be a-shaking in your boots before many days, but ef you go to showing it I'll make it onhealthy for you, too, d'ye see. You get me that money quick, d'ye hear? I want to travel for my health."

With a laugh that was terrible to the young man, and which made the woods ring around them, old Hawks flung off the arm that he had grasped and plunged into the woods.

An hour later, Alfred Guerry came to the place of meeting, with his contract with the demon in his pocket.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHOT IN THE GARDEN.

On the day after the meeting with old Hawks in the woods, Alfred Guerry determined to ride over to the castle, and in some way gain an interview with Cecy Morgan.

He did not doubt her, exactly, but knowing the determined opposition that she had to encounter at home, feared that she might so far yield as to promise a long delay. This, of all things, Guerry dreaded most. So long as old Hawks remained in the neighborhood he could not feel safe, and a long delay, with the frequent calls for money that would be made upon him, must be his ruin.

Ten days had passed since the date of Cecy's last letter—the letter in which she had told him that they must be patient—but he had heard from her indirectly, and knew pretty well the state of affairs at the castle.

It was some seven miles from where the Guerrys lived to the Echaconnee; and, starting late in the afternoon, Alfred rode slowly along, intending to reach the castle about dark. He had abundant time for reflection, but not once did he think seriously of the consequences of being connected with old Hawks; nor, indeed, did he realize the depth of crime into which the old outlaw would lead him.

Vanity was his predominant feeling, and, flattering himself that he could make Cecy do whatever he wished, if he could see her, dreamed of a runaway match, of reconciliation afterward, of the

death of old Morgan, and succession to his large estate. Whatever old Hawks might do was nothing to him, he tried to argue with himself, and even if detected, the consequences must fall upon the old reprobate alone.

He was weak, very weak, this misguided young man, and not even the whisperings of nature, or the presentiments with which the air seemed laden, had the power to make him think seriously upon the wickedness of his course.

It was fast growing dark as he passed through the last bit of wood, and saw the high roofs and chimneys of the castle, half a mile beyond. The sun had gone down behind him while riding along the sandy wood, and the purple haze which had hung about the landscape all day, was now deepening into a black cloud. He saw that a storm was approaching.

He was now nearing the castle, and, tying his horse to the fence near a clump of bushes, he walked on toward the place. It was the night of which we first spoke, and, as already remarked in a previous chapter, the air seemed full of evil omens.

As the twilight deepened, he, too, began to feel an unaccountable depression of mind. Even the cows seemed to look mournfully as he passed the stables; and the ducks and other fowls were unusually noisy in their evening gossip, as they sought sheltered resting-places for the night.

The gloomy presage of sorrow which had fallen upon his mind, grew stronger as he neared the house, and could not be shaken off. Unlike Stannard, who was at that moment enjoying a cigar upon his porch, Guerry could not reason about the

matter, but quickened his steps, and soon came to the line of garden fence. Along this he walked to a sheltered spot near the front gate.

For some time he stood behind the shrubbery, peering through at the windows, which yet showed no light within—drawing in, with every breath, the strong odor of magnolia blossoms, and the still stronger perfumes, in this heavy evening air, that came from the pride of India trees.

A step on the porch made him forget all this. Pushing aside the dense altheas before him, Alfred saw Cecy come from the hall, and walk slowly to the end of the veranda. Very quietly she stood, her hands resting upon the rail, looking wistfully out into the depths of the evening sky.

He would have gazed long upon this beautiful picture, but a storm was approaching, and time was precious to him. Presently, he softly called her name.

“Cecy.”

Though scarcely above a whisper, she started at the sound, and, with parted lips and partially raised hand, she turned her head on one side and listened intently.

Again he spoke; and, conscious now that she was not dreaming, Cecy turned toward him. She was too much terrified to feel glad that he was near, although she had been thinking of him but a moment before.

Casting a furtive glance toward the hall, she carelessly walked down the steps, and, looking at her flower-beds on either side, sauntered up to the fence. She was greatly excited.

“Oh, Alfred! why are you here?”

“Are you not glad to see me, Cecy?”

"Yes—no—Alfred, let me tell you; I have promised to be yours, and I will keep my promise; but, dear Alfred, you are not safe here—indeed, you are not. I cannot explain here. Oh, Alfred! do go away now and let me write to you."

A noise in the hall made her turn hastily into the path; but she came back immediately, and, reaching over the pickets, gave her hand to him. A branch of the althea was pressed down between them, as he took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Now go, Alfred—for my sake, go now."

"Cecy! I must see you for a few moments. If you do truly love me you will grant me a short interview."

"I dare not—Alfred, I dare not. It is not for myself that I fear, but for you. Papa is not himself now; he—he——"

"Cecy, I must see you! Do you not care for me?"

"Oh, yes, yes, I do," she said, almost hysterically now; "but do wait a few days, oh, do."

"I will come at ten," he whispered, after her, as frightened and trembling, she sprang away at the sound of her father's voice.

She barely caught the words as she ran up the walk. Entering the hall, she cast one glance behind, and seeing his anxious face, was deeply moved. He stretched out his arms toward her.

Without noticing that the door to her father's room was open, she motioned to him to go away, and turning, saw her father's eyes fastened upon her.

"Where have you been?" he asked, sharply.

"Out in the garden," she replied, evasively. "I walked down to the gate."

"Has Stannard been here?"

"No, sir; not that I know."

"Who was there, then?"

"No one, papa—there is no one there."

The color left her face as he began to question her; but at this reply, she felt the hot blood rushing to her cheeks, and almost despised herself for stooping to tell him an untruth.

"It is wrong," she thought, "very wrong in Alfred, to subject me to this. I cannot bear it."

By her father's looks she now knew that a suspicion of the truth was entering his mind, and she tried to divert his thoughts.

"Will you have your toddy now?" she asked, excitedly, feeling a great lump in her throat which she vainly tried to swallow. "Shall I bring it to you?"

Without waiting for his reply she hastened away, giving a quick glance at the clock as she passed from the room. Morgan was unusually wild on her return, and she wished that she had been more positive in forbidding Alfred to come.

Calling the servants to watch her father, Cecy went into her own room and tried to think. Was it wrong for her to meet him so? If conscience did tell her that it was not right, a vision of his pale, pleading face came to wrestle with her scruples; and, for his sake—for the sake of keeping him away so long as her father was in his present state, she was resolved to go out for a moment.

She had written to him all about her fears, and it did seem selfish in Alfred to come there then, to increase her terror, and to make her home-life still more bitter should he be detected there.

For the first time a doubt of her lover came into Cecy's mind; but she quickly drove it away.

"It is his love," she said to herself—"his great love for me that brings him here; but he must not come again. I know that he will listen to reason."

Time wore on, and at length the little Parisian clock on the mantel began to strike the hour. She crept out into the hall softly and listened at her father's door, hearing no sound. She had taken the precaution to tie the dogs in their houses, and now stepped noiselessly out. The air was damp, and even with a thick shawl about her shoulders, Cecy saw that she was shaking dreadfully with cold and excitement. A chilly wind was rising, and blowing gusts, added to her discomfort; but she thought of her lover solely, and was conscious of nothing but the desire to get him out of the danger which she believed was menacing him.

A low whistle guided her to the althea bush, and in a moment Guerry had seized her hands across the garden fence.

"Alfred," she said, in much excitement, "it is wrong for me to be here—indeed, I think it is. Do go—for my sake—go at once. Won't you, dear?"

"Cecy, why are you so cold to me. My heart is just aching for you, and you do not want to spend a minute with me."

"I do not—I mean I am not cold to you; but I do so fear for you. You are not safe here."

"What can harm me here? Who could find me in the dark if we were seen even?"

"Do you not think of me, Alfred? Have you not thought what it would be to me if my father saw you here? Oh, Alfred, my life is hard to bear now; do not you make it harder."

For a moment he was abashed, and grew alarmed himself as he listened to her earnest words. He

held her hand so that she could not escape from him.

"Only a few moments, Cecy. I want to tell you——"

A sound in the bushes beyond made both start, and interrupted his words—a sound that resembled the chuckling of a man who was watching their interview.

"Did you hear that, Alfred?" she whispered, in alarm. "For Heaven's sake, Alfred, let me go! Oh, I can bear this no longer! I shall faint!"

She was really terrified now, and tried to tear her hand from his grasp.

"It was nothing, Cecy—it was the wind."

"Let me go! I cannot stay here! I shall die!"

She loosened her hand and sprang away, but in an instant returned, and clasping his neck with her arms, bowed her head upon his breast.

"Have pity on me. I am very weak," she sobbed, but quickly raising her head again, spoke with frightened energy.

"Listen, Alfred. I promised to be your wife, and nothing shall part us. I swear to you that you alone shall have the power to break the engagement. Will you not be patient a little while?"

"It is hard to be patient, Cecy, when everybody says that you will never be allowed to marry me."

"Don't believe them, Alfred. You have my promise. Go, now, do, please go. I have had no suffering like this. I fear for you every moment. You don't know all."

"Just let me tell you——"

She sprang away like a frightened deer, for, hearing a step on the walk, she saw her father, gun in hand, coming toward them. With great presence

of mind, she drew his attention to the opposite side of the path, and tried to check his steps.

Alfred had stepped aside, but when he saw that Morgan was bent on shooting him, ran down the road and mounted his horse.

In an instant the thought came that he was doing a cowardly act to leave the woman he loved, and whom he had led into trouble and danger, to struggle with one who was little better than a maniac; and he rode quickly back to the garden. It was too dark now to expose him at any distance.

Cecy was, indeed, struggling with a maniac. She had no idea which way Alfred had gone, and was in constant fear that he would spring out to aid her, and be shot by her father.

She knew now that her father had watched her closely, suspecting from the first, and that he had been a witness to the meeting with Alfred.

With the cunning peculiar to those who are afflicted with such mania, Morgan had seen her glances at the clock, and suspected the reason for them. Removing his boots, the old man followed her down the walk, and crept behind the very althea bush before which they stood.

He saw who it was with whom she was talking, and with cat-like tread passed through the garden, entering the house by the side door.

Rage had now taken away the little reason that he had remaining. Quickly loading his gun, Morgan came stealthily from the house; but Cecy's quick ears—painfully alert at that time—caught his step the moment that it struck upon the graveled walk. Had she not heard him then what would have been the result? Even while struggling with

him, she shuddered as this thought came into her mind.

Straining every nerve, Cecy tried to hold her father back, but he grew wilder every moment, and soon threw her violently over upon a bed of flowers.

Guerry heard her wail as she fell, and, knowing that Morgan was now loose, turned to flee. Cursing and raving, Morgan ran to the gate, and fired his gun at random into the shrubbery.

Cecy had nearly reached him again, when the flash of the gun made her start back; and in terror she heard the report ringing out upon the heavy night air.

Its echoes had not ceased ere from the shrubbery came a cry, followed by a smothered but audible groan, and without a word, she sank senseless upon the ground.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEATH OF OLD MORGAN.

The report of the gun in the garden alarmed the entire place, and Ogletree with half a dozen negroes came running to the spot.

They raised Cecy from the ground, and, seeing that she was not shot, took her into the house. Morgan went in before them—silent and passive for a moment, then bursting out into demoniac fits of raving.

It was some time before Miss Morgan opened her eyes. She saw Ogletree in the hall, near her door, and called him in.

“Is he dead?” she asked, faintly.

“Oh, no, miss,” he replied, thinking that she spoke of her father; “he is not hurt.”

“Look again! Look in the bushes to the left. Oh, go—go at once!”

Ogletree began to understand her now, and went out to get lanterns. They searched the shrubbery well, but could find no man there, yet near the fence was a pool of blood, which trickled along a few paces into the road. The fresh tracks made there by a horse, told the rest of the story.

The assurance could not calm Cecy’s fears; for, if able to get away, that cry she had heard was proof enough that Alfred was wounded. Even then, she thought, he might be dying by the road-side.

The house was in confusion. Alarmed at the condition of their young mistress, the servants had forgotten Morgan in the other room; but he was

now calm, and had probably sunk down upon his bed, worn out with excitement and fatigue.

Setting the usual watch, the servants retired. Two or three hours passed—sleepless hours to Cecy Morgan—when the old man was heard moving about his room, mumbling and cursing to himself.

Throwing on a wrapper, Cecy stepped out to see if the servant was at his post, and returning, went along the hall to make sure that the front door was bolted. Just as she again reached her own door her arm was seized violently, and before she could resist, her father had dragged her into his own room. He turned the key in the lock, and it was with horror that she saw the inner door firmly fastened.

“We’ll have it out to-night,” he said, fiercely, still grasping her arm. “Will you promise me never to see that Guerry again?”

His strong grip was pressing into her tender arm, giving intense pain, and he whirled her around roughly, to bring her before him.

“Do not! Oh, my father, do not—you hurt me—do let me go!”

“Will you promise!”

“Father, he may be dead. Perhaps you have killed him!”

“I wish I had—curse him! I tried hard enough, but he got away from me. I wish I had shot his father thirty years ago.”

Cecy felt a thrill of pleasure, even in her terrible situation, as she heard from her father’s lips that Alfred had escaped, and she breathed a prayer to Heaven that his injury might have been slight.

“Papa, listen to me,” she said, beseechingly, “I

have promised him and cannot break my word at once; let me——”

“You won’t, then? That’s what you mean, is it? Would you rather go to your grave?”

He pulled her rudely to the bedside, and, reaching his hand under the pillow, drew out a long carving knife. Raising it menacingly, he held it above her head.

“Would you kill me, father?” she implored, as she fell upon her knees at his feet; “would you kill your own daughter?”

“Kill you! Yes, ten times over rather than see you the wife of that man.”

Again he raised the knife as if to strike.

“Help! oh, Heaven help me!” she cried, feebly, as she fell unconscious on the floor.

How long she remained there insensible Miss Morgan never knew. When she again opened her eyes they fell upon a sight that nearly froze her soul with horror.

Swaying to and fro beside the bed stood her father, swinging his arms wildly about, and raving incoherently. His breast was covered with bloody wounds. Blood was fast dripping from him, and fell upon the floor in drops; the window was broken, and the chairs thrown about in confusion, as if a struggle had taken place within the room.

Within her reach lay the bloody knife, and quickly seizing it, she gave shriek after shriek, as she rose and pushed her father down upon the bed. He fell heavily across it, and she was exerting her feeble strength to the utmost in trying to raise his feet, when Ogletree and the negroes broke in the door.

In the excitement of the moment, Cecy had not remembered that the door was bolted. She still

held the bloody knife in her hand. Ogletree took it from her, and turned to lay Morgan farther on the bed; but the old man resisted, with all the strength that remained to him, the efforts to aid him or to check the flow of blood.

Turning her face away from that dreadful bed, her eyes looked out into the garden. Was she asleep? Through the honeysuckle vine that clambered over the veranda, she saw two piercing eyes, that shone even in the dark, and the haggard face of a heavily bearded man.

In a second it was gone. She could not move, but rubbed her eyes to see if she was really awake, and satisfied on that score, tried again and again to bring the phantom back. Long after, when her reason had been restored, Cecy wondered if this were merely an image of the brain.

Doing the best that he could for old Morgan, and leaving him in charge of the negroes, Ogletree saddled a horse and rode off for Doctor Trippe.

It was a cold, stormy, windy morning. Before daylight he had reached Stannard's house, and calling him up, as before narrated, rode on at full speed.

Trippe was just dismounting at his own gate when the overseer arrived. Without going into his house he sprang into the saddle again, as soon as he heard the story, and rode off at a break-neck pace down the long, sandy hill leading to Echaconnee.

Stannard was but a few moments ahead of him, and Trippe stepped into the room in time to hear the dying man's last words.

For some time Cecy had slept upon the couch where she had thrown herself, but was roused by

Stannard's halloa at the gate, and looked out into the gray morning twilight. It was a long time before she could collect her scattered senses. Were the events of this terrible night real, or had she dreamed them?

With damp clothing, and senses still wandering, Cecy crept to the bed to see her father, and had just kneeled there when Stannard entered the room.

Old Morgan was near his death when his neighbors arrived. For the past twenty-four hours he had been really insane, and, in all probability, knew not what he did; but acted with that boldness and cunning peculiar to lunatics.

Stannard listened intently to catch the old man's words, but could make nothing of them, and set them down as the ravings of a madman.

"It's all yours, my boy," Morgan said, feebly, squeezing Stannard's hand. "I killed her—she killed me, boy, she killed me—I'd rather see her in her grave than married to him. All yours, my boy, with a little wife;" but suddenly he seemed to realize what he was saying. "No, no, Stannard, I killed her—killed her with my own hand."

It was pitiful to hear this poor old man, fast sinking into his grave, mumble out such words; and Stannard's eyes were filled with tears, as he stood beside his good old friend, who was going from earth in this dreadful manner.

It was perfectly evident to Stannard that Morgan was out of his head, for he raved of killing his daughter, when she was alive before him; and with this fancy was another that he had been killed by her. Yet again he would think of the past, and mutter over the hopes which Stannard had heard years ago, when a mere boy.

To his mind the matter was simple enough. The murderer had entered by the broken window, had accomplished his purpose, and escaped by the same way.

Once only did a suspicion enter Stannard's mind. Much of the old man's incoherent talk was about Guerry, and, if his words meant anything, he must have seen Guerry during the night. But Stannard's generous nature would not permit him to condemn the young man, in his own mind even, upon the wild words of a dying lunatic. He was thankful that Trippe had not heard this.

"He has a strange prejudice against Guerry," Stannard thought, "and I am very glad that he came so late. Unless Alf could prove where he was last night, it might give him some trouble."

For Cecy's sake, Stannard wished to aid the young man, and determined to say nothing about Morgan's dying words. As he made this resolution, Stannard thought what those words were, and realized that he had to shield Cecy Morgan from annoyance and public gossip, rather than Alfred Guerry.

Perfectly satisfied about the matter himself, Stannard made up his mind to keep the secret, unless the ends of justice positively required its revelation.

Daylight came, and one by one the neighbors began to arrive at the castle, each bringing some wild rumor of the event

How is it that news flies from house to house with no apparent means? How was it that the Greeks, fighting on the sea, heard of a land victory at the same time, hundreds of miles away? How was it that, during the late war, we heard of battles far

from us, long before even the telegraph flashed the news over the country? It is one of those mysteries which the mind strives in vain to comprehend.

Far away from railroads or telegraph; in country villages where even the mail comes but twice a week, we heard rumors of bloody engagements, in which loved ones were slain, many days before the flying reports were officially confirmed.

Is it that different kinds of concussion, or agitation, in the atmosphere convey different impressions to the mind? Does this natural agency bring us hope, or fear, or sorrow, or despair? Or are there, indeed, spirits abroad which whisk about upon the winds to whisper words in our ears?

Believe as we may, the simple fact remains; and we know, because the whisper makes a deeper impression on the mind, that evil news does fly rapidly and mysteriously about.

Daylight had scarcely come ere the whole Echaconnee settlement was aroused by a report that Morgan and his daughter had both been murdered in their beds.

Miss Morgan was lying in her own room, when the neighbors came, and their first inquiries were for her. Stannard explained her condition to them, while in the dining-room, as before narrated, and was joining in their proposal to offer a reward for the murderer, when a negro entered the door.

"Mars' William!" he said, using the first name as nearly all negroes do when speaking to young men; "Mars' William, kin I speak to you a minit?"

"Certainly, my boy. What do you want?"

"Please come outside a minute," the boy said, seeing the white men pushing up to hear what he had to say.

Stannard followed the boy into the garden and along the walk. Passing through the gate, they turned to the right, and stopped by a clump of altheas.

The negro pointed down into the bushes. Stannard saw that some one had been pushing through the shrubs to reach the garden-fence; and on the ground found a letter, nearly concealed by the branches that had been trodden down.

It gave him a great shock as he raised this letter, and saw his own handwriting; and hastily examined the contents to find that it was the letter in which, a few days before, he had inclosed the check to Alfred Guerry.

Stannard started back and pressed his hands upon his temples as if the very effort of trying to solve this mystery, was painful. He saw the blood on the other side; he saw the tracks of both man and horse, and a break in the hedge where a man, or where men had crowded through.

Why Morgan's fierce dogs had not attacked the intruders he could not imagine. Turning to the negro he slipped a coin into his hand.

"What is your name?"

"Dick, marster."

"Well, Dick, here is a gold piece for you. Don't you say one word about this—not even to the negroes—do you understand?"

"Mars' William, I won't say anything about it."

"Put on your hat, Dick. Say nothing to a living soul about this, and in a few days come to my house for a mate to it. I'll give you a fine pig in the bargain."

The negro promised faithfully, and went to the quarters. Stannard returned to conclude his story;

but was called out by Trippe, who wished to give him a word of caution.

It was a few moments later that he sat by the fire trying to think over the events of this dreadful morning, and to find some good reason for Guerry's appearance the night before.

That either Miss Morgan or Alfred Guerry were in any way responsible for Morgan's death he could not believe.

CHAPTER X.

DOCTOR TRIPPE'S HORSE FOUND IN THE CREEK.

The clock was striking twelve when Stannard was aroused from his heavy slumber, after the arrival of Mrs. Trippe, and told that the doctor had been some time in the house. He sprang up at once.

Doctor Hamilton Pierce, or Ham Pierce, as his friends familiarly called him, was a man about Stannard's age, of excellent family, and a physician of unusual ability.

With a brilliant mind, a quick, sparkling wit, and power of sarcasm, he had a personal courtesy and grace which was worthy a Bayard.

His natural mental power added to his education, or, it should be said, to which a good education had been added, made him a great favorite with men of Stannard's stamp.

Yet with all his cleverness he had one failing. In a small town like Fort Valley, where the "unco good" assume the entire control of society, such failings are apt to be magnified and largely canvassed. It was particularly so in the case of unfortunate Ham Pierce.

The son of a celebrated divine, the brother of a bishop, the leading men of the church expected him to take part in the roaring revivals which periodically excited the community. with the regularity of the hooping-cough or measles.

But neither threats nor flattery could induce Ham to join in these meetings. Very courteously he re-

fused them, however, and was want to aver that this led to a kind of religious dissipation, which, as a physician, he could not approve.

Still, Ham was regular in his worship at other times; and but one real fault could be urged against him—a fault which harmed no one but himself.

Failing in all else, this was made the pretext for a mean and petty persecution. And when a new doctor settled in the place—one who was politic enough to join in the revivals, yet having the same fault in secret—he was taken up by the church set, and got capital recommendations even from the pulpit.

Griffin, Allen, Matthews and a few others of the more cultivated, upheld Pierce strongly; but the pressure was too heavy, and his practice soon dwindled down to the families of the educated class, and the poor. Ham's charity practice was immense. He never refused a call from the poor, day or night, and rode fifty miles to pay visits of charity, where his rival rode one.

Mrs. Pierce, a Floridian, a lady of quiet, elegant manners, was also a favorite with Stannard; and he never visited Fort Valley without calling on her. The two men were very fond of each other.

Stannard made his toilet in a few moments, and went into the room where Trippe was lying.

Pierce had just performed some operation for relieving compression of the brain, and was wiping his instruments by the bedside.

"My dear fellow," said Stannard, heartily, grasping the doctor's hand, "I am very glad you have come. What do you think of him?"

Turning to look at Trippe, they saw him roll his head uneasily from side to side.

"That is a good sign," Pierce remarked; "it shows that consciousness is returning. He is not yet sensible of pain."

"Do you think he will recover, Ham?"

"I cannot tell yet. I hope so. Heaven knows I will do all that I can for him."

"I am sure you will," said Stannard, earnestly. "I could not wish him in other hands than yours, Ham."

"Thanks, Stannard, for your good opinion. I am more hopeful now than I was at first. Letting out the extravasated blood and raising the fractured bone seems to have relieved him already. See!" he said, pushing back Trippe's eyelids, "his pupils are getting natural again."

"Where is Mrs. Trippe?"

"I sent her out; she could not bear to see the operation, and troubled me so with her moaning that I had to ask her to leave the room. I promised to send for her when it was over."

"Poor lady!" said Stannard, sympathetically. "It makes my heart ache to think of her grief."

"What is all this, Stannard? I want to hear your story. Those men tried to tell me about the murder, but I had no time to listen."

"Have they gone?"

"Some time ago. I fancy they finished your brandy first though."

"There's more in the sideboard for you—"—

Stannard was interrupted by a servant, who came in to say that Mr. Simmons had passed, leaving word for Stannard to go over to the castle at once.

"It is for the inquest," he remarked. "Ham, I must leave you for a time, but will come back as soon as I can. Then I can tell you more about this

mysterious affair than I can now. They may send for you, if so you'll find a horse in the stables."

"Thanks! Was there no doctor beside Trippe?"

"None. If they have any doubt about the matter they may send for you. There's very little about it in my opinion."

"How so?"

"The murderer broke in the window. Morgan must have struggled with him, for there was blood all over the floor."

"Who could have done it?"

"There it is! I'm sure I haven't the remotest idea who could have done it. One of the negroes says that he saw a horse tied by the edge of the timber, and afterward caught a man hanging about the shrubbery."

"Could it have been for revenge or for robbery? Morgan was not a very amiable man."

"Ham, I have not a suspicion. Miss Morgan can tell nothing about it. The old man was raving about her in the most absurd way when he died. Trippe heard it."

"Perhaps I'd better see her if they do not send for me."

"I wish you would, Ham. I must go now."

A few passing remarks were exchanged, and Stannard rode away, leaving his friend at the gate.

Left to himself, Stannard's mind took a rapid survey of the events which had crowded themselves into the few past hours, and tried in vain to make some kind of a connected story of them.

"We read in the papers, and in books," he thought, "of these mysterious murders, and when told by clever writers are affected by them. Who

would have imagined yesterday that we should have such a sensational affair to-day, in this quiet settlement.

"There is my friend Parker," he continued, in this strain of thought, "who writes popular stories. Some critic calls them 'blood and thunderous.' 'Pon my word, Parker never did anything that equals this story in real life."

The sky had grown brighter, but leaden-colored clouds floated across the horizon, and the air was cool. The sandy road was still wet and heavy.

As Stannard rode across the Echaconnee bridge, he stopped on the opposite side, and looked down upon the spot where Doctor Trippe had been found lying.

Wondering how the accident could have happened—wondering whether it really was an accident or an attempted murder, he cast his eyes down the stream, and was instantly arrested by an object that he saw in the water.

It was some distance down, just where the creek turned, and was lost in the thick swamp. Raising his eye-glass, he examined the object, and soon made out the hoof and leg of a horse. Tracing it along he saw the saddle, partly submerged, and overhung by the bushes which drooped over the bank.

For the first time, Stannard remembered that Trippe's horse had not been seen after the accident, and he had no doubt that this was the doctor's fine, spirited thoroughbred.

Dismounting, Stannard was about to walk down the stream for a better view, when he heard voices near him, and the tread of horses' feet upon the dry bridge beyond,

Simmons, the coroner, and two or three men who had assisted in finding Trippe, were coming to the spot.

“Good-morning, colonel,” said the coroner, raising his hat, “I thought we had better examine into the doctor’s fall, to see if we could find anything to show connection with the other.

“I am glad you came, Simmons; I was about to look at that animal down there in the turn.”

“That’s him, by——” exclaimed Barton, slapping his hand down upon his leg. “That’s the doctor’s brown horse—I’d swear to him anyhow.”

“I think it is, Barton.”

“I jist know it, kurnel—there ain’t no kind o’ doubt on it in my mind.”

“We’ll soon see,” said Simmons, tying his horse to the rail of the bridge.

The party dismounted, and, walking by the log upon which Trippe had fallen, pushed their way through the thick growth of young shrubs and rank weeds.

It is no easy task to walk through a thicket of a Southern swamp. Long, tangled creepers hung about their legs, while swinging grape-vines and festoons of moss obstructed the way.

It was a good half-hour’s work ere they reached the bend of the stream and looked upon the body of Tripp’s beautiful horse.

Barton reached down and took hold of the bridle.

“Give us a hand here, Ira, will ye; let’s pull him up a little.”

With the aid of the current, the horse was easily pulled upon the low bank, and they saw at a glance the cause of his death. Entering the neck and

passing into the body, was a bullet wound, which must have produced immediate death.

They saw it all, then. Trippe had been fired on by some one, and the ball had entered the body of his horse. With one bound, the magnificent animal had sprung from the bridge, throwing his rider upon the bank, and falling into the stream.

The current had swept the body down until it became tangled in some cypress roots, and thus it escaped the notice of those who had raised the insensible body of Doctor Trippe.

Would the latter live to tell them who the assassin was? Stannard fervently hoped that he might, and the miscreant might be brought to justice.

Remembering the hole that he had seen in the doctor's coat some days before, Stannard tried to think who, of all in that vicinity, would be likely to commit such a deed.

"If it was, indeed, old Hawks, he shall be hanged," said Stannard to himself, as he rode on toward the castle, followed by the coroner and his party.

As much occupied as his mind had been on that eventful morning, Stannard had dwelt much upon the position of Miss Morgan, and it made his heart ache to think of the troubles with which she was surrounded.

Gladly, indeed, would he have taken them all upon himself, could he have done so. She had no one now to care for her—to be a father or guardian to her—and it must devolve upon him.

"I will be a father to her," he told himself; "I will care for her as if she were my own sister. I cannot—alas! I may not—be nearer to her; but she

shall never want for a counselor or a friend, so long as I live."

Following the servant into Cecy's room, he found her lying as he had left her earlier in the day, and apparently asleep. For some moments he gazed in silence upon her beautiful and placid face.

The sound of his voice seemed to rouse her slightly, and with a low moan she turned her head toward him, opening her eyes full upon his face. But there was no look of recognition in them.

He spoke to her gently.

"Are you better, Cecy? Do you not feel better?"

Moaning as before, she drew her white hand slowly across her brow; but it soon fell upon her bosom, and her eyes again closed wearily.

Brushing the tears from his eyes, Stannard left the room and went into the chamber where the murdered man was still lying.

CHAPTER XI.

GUILTY OF MURDER.

The coroner had formed his jury of five citizens when Stannard entered the room where the dead body lay.

Upon the table at which Simmons was sitting, with his thumb inserted between the leaves of the "Revised Statutes," lay the knife which Ogletree had taken from Miss Morgan's hand. The spots of blood were fast drying upon the polished blade; but there could be no doubt that this was the instrument with which the deed had been done.

A juror took it up and drew his thumb across the sharp edge, but dropped it quickly, at a glance from the coroner. But once before, during his official career, had Simmons been called upon to hold an inquest in a case of murder, and he now fully realized the importance of the case in hand.

If this was his first serious experience, Simmons thought, it did not follow that the jury was aware of the fact; and he seemed to feel it incumbent upon him to act as if such scenes were of common occurrence with him.

But, as usual in such cases, the coroner greatly overacted his part. Stannard could scarcely refuse a smile at this, despite the seriousness of the occasion; yet this pompous manner became very serious in itself, a few minutes later, when it was found that Simmons was deaf to all suggestions, and even to reason.

Ordering an examination of the wounds, Simmons opened the statutes, and glanced furtively at the pages which detailed the duties of a coroner.

Very carefully the five men began to study the body, pressing open each wound and testing it with the knife, as if every man of them had not made up his mind before stepping to the bedside.

Not one had any doubt that it was with this instrument the deed had been committed. The question that remained was, who held the knife when the fatal blows had been struck. That it belonged to the house was a fact, the jury thought, which seemed to fasten the crime upon some inmate of the castle; and Stannard was shocked to find that, even before the proceedings had fairly begun, suspicion strongly pointed to Miss Morgan.

Standing by her bedside a few moments before, it had occurred to him that some offensive remarks might be made—remarks which he hoped might never reach her ears; but that a jury of sensible men, with only mere circumstantial evidence, could really think her guilty of such a crime, he did not imagine.

During the morning, the negroes had been gossiping with the neighbors assembled, giving them wildly exaggerated accounts of the scene in the night. They had seen "old marster" lying across the bed, and Miss Cecy standing over him with a knife; one had seen her strike a blow as the door was broken down; others could swear that the dying man, with the last words that he spoke, accused Miss Cecy of the murder.

These rumors had been added to and embellished when discussing the affair, and each juror began his labors with the firm conviction that Miss Morgan

had murdered her father because he opposed her marriage with Alfred Guerry.

Two or three times Stannard tried to interpose, but Simmons checked him brusquely. Finally he was called up for examination.

"Now, Colonel Stannard, we'll hear what you have got to say," Simmons began. "Did you see Mr. Morgan when he was alive?"

"I did."

"What were his last words—among the last, I mean?"

Stannard hesitated. He felt that his resolution to say nothing which could be construed as prejudicial to Miss Morgan, was easier thought than accomplished. The question embarrassed him, and had to be repeated before he spoke.

"He said—the truth is, sir, his words were very incoherent and rambling. I am sure that Morgan had not the slightest idea of what he was saying."

"But, Colonel Stannard, that does not answer our question—what were Morgan's last words?—as near as you can repeat them?"

Stannard repeated them with reluctance, and not without an attempt at remonstrance, as he saw the jury look at each other.

"I must say, Mr. Coroner—I must again say that Morgan knew not what he was saying. He was not in his right mind."

"That is your opinion, Colonel Stannard. Excuse me for saying that we want facts only—the jury will give an opinion. Tell us, if you please, at whom Mr. Morgan was pointing when he said that?"

"In the direction of Miss Morgan," Stannard began, but added, with an attempt to make a diver-

sion, "He might have been pointing at that broken window."

"At Miss Morgan," Simmons repeated. "Was not Morgan weak from illness before his death?"

"He was, sir."

"Could he not have broken that window when trying to escape from the—from his—assailant?"

"It is possible; but really you cannot think that he did. I am as sure as I live that——"

"It is possible, you say," interrupted Simmons; "we want no opinions, if you please."

Stannard said no more, but his heart sank as he saw the effect produced by his words and observed that the coroner was bent upon asking questions with the evident intention of criminating Miss Morgan. But few more had already been asked ere Stannard was well aware that the jury had already decided the case; yet not one of these men would have admitted that he had a particle of prejudice.

The entire examination was too long to be given here, and we take a question here and there from the mass to show the general drift.

"You say, Colonel Stannard, that you feel sure the murderer broke in the window, and entered in that way. Have you any idea who it was?"

"None in the world. I cannot imagine any one who would do this."

"Do you think it probable that a man could enter the yard without being seized by the dogs?"

"It might be done, I think. I am satisfied that it was done."

"Does it seem probable that they would not have alarmed the place?"

"I do not know, sir."

"To me it seems very improbable," said Simmons,

pompously. "No man could enter my yard, and Morgan's dogs were as savage as mine. Did anybody else hear Morgan's words?"

"Yes, sir; Miss Morgan heard them, also Doctor Trippe. One or two negroes, perhaps."

"Do you think those words conclusive?"

"Not at all. I am sure they are not. I have already told you that Morgan did not know what he was saying."

"That is not for us to decide. Colonel Stannard, who sent for you?"

"Ogletree called me, as he went by for the doctor. I did not know what the matter was until I came in."

"Do you see anything that would be likely to connect this murder with Doctor Trippe's accident?"

Again Stannard hesitated. The probabilities were that the same men committed both deeds, but he could urge nothing but his own idea of the probability.

"To me it seems highly improbable," Simmons remarked, "and I shall give my reasons presently."

Stannard felt greatly relieved when permitted to take his seat; but he felt that, despite his efforts to shield the poor girl, his evidence had told fearfully against her.

Miss Morgan was not a favorite in the settlement. Her superior education and experience placed her far above the girls around her; and though she treated them all with the utmost courtesy and kindness, they were inclined to resent her persistence in checking an intimacy which each desired.

In this manner, Cecy had unconsciously made bitter enemies of the wives and daughters of the

very men who composed the jury; and they had come, without having exchanged a word with her, to think that she was one who regarded herself too good for the society in which she lived. In small country places nothing creates so strong a feeling of enmity.

With painful interest, Stannard listened to the overseer's story, and saw that the questions tended to but one purpose.

"Mr. Ogletree," said Simmons, "you must remember that you are on your oath, the same as if in a court of law. Will you tell the jury if you ever heard of any quarrels between Miss Morgan and her father?"

"Never until recently, sir. Of late they have had frequent quarrels—or high words. They were all on his side, though. He was a hasty man."

"Go on. Did you not see them in the garden? Tell the story in your own words."

"Not in the garden. I came up the walk one day, and saw Miss Morgan and her father quarreling on the porch. She had a stick in her hand, apparently threatening him."

"Go on. What did he say?"

"He said, 'You would kill your father for your lover,' or words to that effect."

"Did you see anything between them last night?" asked a juror.

"I can't say that I did. About two o'clock the negroes called me, and said there was trouble in the house. When I came in, both doors were fastened on the inside. The negroes were crying around both. I heard a noise inside—screams—but couldn't tell the voice, the servants made so much fuss. I saw something was wrong, and stove in the door."

"Well—go on," said Simmons, sharply, as Ogle-tree seemed loth to proceed; "tell the whole story, sir."

"There isn't much more to tell. Mr. Morgan was lying across the bed. Miss Morgan was trying to push his feet up."

"Did she have that knife in her hand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see her use it? Remember, you are on your oath."

"No, sir. She was holding the knife in her right hand—so."

"What did she say?"

"Not a word. I helped her get Morgan's legs upon the bed, then ran to saddle my horse and go for the doctor. I called up Colonel Stannard as I went by his house."

Miss Morgan was still in a state of stupor when the inquest was going on. The whole tenor of it seemed to be against her, and Stannard, now really heart-sick, walked back into Cecy's room.

She started suddenly as Stannard looked down upon her, threw up her arms, then sank away into a peaceful slumber.

"She's bin doing that all the morning," said the servant to him.

And looking at her placid face once more, he stepped out into the hall.

There was noise in the adjoining room, and the general conversation that was carried on told Stannard that the verdict had been rendered. The paper, still wet with ink, was lying upon the table, near which Simmons, who was also a magistrate, was copying the form of a committal from the code.

Stannard took up the verdict and read:

"We, the jury of inquisition, ordered to investigate the murder of Daniel Morgan, planter, do hereby solemnly swear that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, after a careful examination of the facts, the said Daniel Morgan came to his death by reason of wounds inflicted with a carving-knife, in the hands of his daughter, Miss Cecilia Morgan."

The paper shook like a leaf in Stannard's hand.

"No, no, gentlemen!" he cried; "this cannot be. You are all wrong—indeed you are!"

"The law must decide that, Colonel Stannard," Simmons replied, secure in his position; and at the same time handed his authority to the constable. Raborn took the verdict from Stannard's hand.

"Where is Miss Morgan; I must see her."

"Raborn, she is very ill. It will never do to speak of this now—it would endanger her life. Doctor Pierce is at my house, and will see her this afternoon."

"Then I must remain here until she's well enough to be taken to Perry."

The two men were walking along the hall when the constable said this, but Stannard turned sharply.

"Good Heaven! Raborn, you cannot mean it. That is cruelty itself."

"I'm only doing my duty, colonel. If I had my way about it, she'd never go there."

"True, Raborn; I beg your pardon. I would stake my life that this is all wrong. That's why I spoke as I did."

Stannard was passing out of the hall when Simmons called him back.

"I must take your recognizance, colonel, to appear as a witness—a mere matter of form, you know."

Almost mechanically, Stannard went through the formality, and, with a sad and heavy heart, stepped to the window. He tried to recall the words of Trippe. What was the explanation that he was about to make when interrupted? What effect would it have had upon this stupid jury?

Stannard was thoroughly angry with these men. The more he thought about it, the more the idea grew upon him, that Morgan's murderer had entered by this window—that he had committed the deed, and afterward tried to kill Trippe, who must have had some suspicion as to who the criminal was.

The doctor's manner in the morning was of a man who knew a secret that he would not tell; and Stannard heartily prayed that he might recover in time to prevent this great outrage to Miss Morgan.

"But for that unfortunate affair she would never have been subjected to this," he thought, bitterly, and turned to the window to see the jurors going to their horses.

Now that the inquest was over, two or three of the neighbors were preparing to lay out the body; and Stannard watched the others as they mounted, after gossiping for a few moments at the gate.

It was only too evident that all who had heard the testimony were firmly convinced that Miss Morgan was guilty of the murder of her father.

Suddenly, as he stood there lost in thought, Stannard clasped his hand upon his pocket.

"Good Heaven!" he exclaimed, "what have I done. This letter would have removed all suspicion from her. I did not once think of it."

For a moment only, he regretted this oversight, and then came the thought that, to have diverted

suspicion from Cecy in this way would have been to throw it upon Alfred Guerry, who could not be guilty of such a crime.

He determined to see Guerry at once. Sending home for Doctor Pierce, Stannard mounted Cecy's own saddle horse, and rode over to the Guerrys'.

Alfred was not at home. At an early hour that morning he had started for Macon, leaving a note to inform his family of his departure. As far away as the Guerrys lived, the news of Morgan's murder had already reached them, and the white-haired old preacher listened intently to Stannard's version of the affair.

That Alfred had been home the night before, the old man did not doubt, and so answered when Stannard asked the question. He felt sure that his son had slept at home, and full of confidence, went to Alfred's chamber to satisfy his own eyes.

One glance into that room seemed to change the whole appearance of the old man, for, as pale as death, he sank down into a chair, and seemed lost in thought. There were evidences enough that Alfred had not slept in his bed that night.

Riding homeward, Stannard tried hard to work out the problems that perplexed his mind. He could not permit Miss Morgan to lie under this suspicion; yet, to relieve her, he must throw suspicion upon her lover. He could not talk to Cecy now; he must see Alfred Guerry at once. A few words to state the serious trouble that would follow the revelation which he might be forced to make, would certainly bring him to Echaconnee.

Even as the thought was in his mind, Stannard saw a man whom he would swear to be Alfred

Guerry, standing in a small clump of pines, some few yards away.

In an instant the figure disappeared, and before Stannard could pass beyond the bushes which obstructed his view, it had gone entirely.

He called loudly for some time, but got no response; and now, more than ever troubled, rode quickly back to the castle.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FORGED ORDER—ANOTHER VISIT TO OLD HAWKS.

The sun was fast declining in the west when Stannard returned to the castle. Doctor Pierce was smoking a cigar upon the veranda.

"How is she, Ham?" Stannard asked, walking toward the hall door.

"She's asleep now; better let her rest if she can. I will come over with you in the morning."

Knowing that Miss Morgan was not able to leave her bed, Raborn had gone to the overseer's house for his dinner.

Together the two men went down the walk. Stannard paused at the gate.

"Aleck!" he called, to one of the house boys, "tell Mr. Ogletree that I will ride Philip home, and bring him back in the morning."

A boy led the horses up, and Stannard stroked the sleek neck of the beautiful bay, upon whose back Cecy had so often rode. More than twelve months before, he had given her the horse, and Cecy had called him Philip, after his own crown-pate setter, a dog of which he was very fond.

Would she ever again take a run over the country with Philip? He prayed that she might soon be up again; but it chilled his heart as he thought of her recovery and its consequences.

"Ham, what do you think of her?" he asked, as they started on. "Is she very sick?"

"No—that is——" replied the doctor, slowly and thoughtfully. "Was there anything like hereditary insanity in Morgan?" he asked, abruptly.

"Never. The family have always been strong, mentally. Morgan ruined his mind by excessive drinking. He was a disappointed man. If ever a man did love a woman, Morgan loved Mattie Allen—

now Mrs. Guerry—and I don't think he ever recovered from the shock her marriage gave him."

"I asked to find out if she was predisposed to insanity."

"Oh, no, not at all."

"Then I have no fears for her. She has received a terrible shock, and lies in a state of lethargy. A blow upon the head could not have produced a more complete torpor of the mental faculties."

"Is that common?"

"It is to such natures as hers. She may remain so several days; but will gradually come out of it. The main thing is to keep her from all excitement. Until fully restored she should not hear a word about last night."

"We must keep the servants from talking about it to her."

For some time they rode on in silence. Stannard was greatly troubled by the position in which he was placed, and longed to tell his friend the secret of the letter.

At length he resolved to do so, and made a clean breast of it, revealing nothing but the fact of his sending money in the letter. Pierce thought the matter over without speaking.

"One thing is clear to my mind, Stannard, it's your duty not to let that poor girl suffer by concealing this fact."

"But what can I do, Ham? If I am the means of bringing trouble upon him, she would think it very hard. You don't know her—she is the most generous, the kindest, best-hearted girl that I ever saw."

"Why did you never——"

"There, there, Ham," interrupted Stannard, "I know what you are going to ask; but that is impossible now. I'm sure that she loves Guerry, and any trouble to him would break her heart."

"But, think a minute, Stannard; suppose he is not worthy of her. If he was concerned in this, in any way, it should be known. I must say that circumstances are against him. I never saw Guerry but once, and then I did not like him at all."

"Trippe does not like him either; but I never

could see why. He is a very worthy young man, so far as I know. Besides, Ham, this letter may have been dropped the day before. His father assured me that Alf was at home last night, and we may do him a great wrong. I thought that I saw him in Johnson's wood to-day; but must have been mistaken."

For a short time neither spoke; but presently Stannard continued:

"I know her well, and knew that she would rather have the stigma rest on herself than on him. I shall write to him this evening."

"And give him warning to get out of the way, I suppose?"

"Now, Ham, you are as bad as Trippe. Alf would not go away so long as Cecy is in trouble; and my fear is that we shall not be able to keep him from the castle."

"You know him better than I do," said Pierce, in reply. "I should not judge him, perhaps; but I did not get any very exalted ideas of him."

"He is not up to your standard—I'll admit that, Ham; but he is young yet, and has several years to live before he gets to our age. This marriage may be the making of him."

"Neither time nor opportunity ever can make some men—may be he is one of them. I wonder how he ever came to pass for the bar."

"I don't know, I'm sure. He is not very brilliant in that line; but then what are the young doctors when first turned loose upon the world?"

"I give in," said Pierce, laughing; "you have me there."

"Yet, nearly all, or a majority of these young fellows, make very good physicians in the end."

"I'm sure they do. Ham, you and I have reached an age when we begin to see that it is unsafe to laugh at a young man. A young fellow of four-and-twenty has a great advantage over one at four-and-thirty, and he may live to shame the other for wasting his opportunities. Guerry has a profession that opens to him a career of politics, and we may yet find ourselves asking some official position from

him. He is poor now, but—but she has enough for—them.”

Stannard turned his head to hide his emotion from the doctor.

“Ham, it would break her heart—it would kill his father—if this thing should fall upon him even as strong as it rests on her. I shall see him in the morning, for as soon as he hears of this verdict—confound them? Simmons is a bigger fool than I ever thought him. I wanted to thrash him for his stupidity.”

They had now reached Stannard’s gate; and, giving orders for the careful grooming of Philip, went into the house. Trippe appeared easier than when the doctor had left him, and, under the careful nursing of his wife, was receiving every possible attention.

After dinner, Stannard took his friend out upon the porch, and they sat smoking their cigars, where, twenty-four hours before, he had sat alone. But one topic could be discussed between them, and although several attempts were made to turn the conversation into other channels, thoughts of the dreadful events of that day would bring it back to the starting point.

For two or three hours they remained there, on Stannard’s magnolia-shaded porch, but at length the doctor looked at his watch.

“I’ll come up in the midday train to-morrow——”

“You don’t mean to say that you are going back to-night?”

“I must. My wife will be anxious about me. Besides, I have patients to see in the morning.”

“I am sorry to have you go, but if you must it is time to start. I hear the eleven o’clock express coming. No hurry,” Stannard added, as Pierce sprang to his feet; “at night we hear the train a half hour before it gets down. I’ll walk over with you.”

As they reached the station, the night express came rushing round the curve, whistling down the breaks to show that the signal had been seen, with

its brilliant headlight gleaming through the mist which hung about the Echaconnee swamp.

Without stopping entirely, the train was slackened sufficiently for the doctor to get on, and he sprang upon the steps. "Don't miss the train to-morrow, Ham; be sure. Regards to Mrs. Pierce," Stannard called, in answer to the doctor's salute, as the train bore him away.

Full of trouble, Stannard returned to his house, and wrote to Alfred Guerry before retiring. It was no easy task for him, and he was dissatisfied with his words when the letter was completed.

"DEAR ALF.:" he wrote, "It is of the utmost importance that I should see you immediately. You will see in the papers the verdict of the coroner's jury, and I assure you that it is a shameful thing. The evidence was entirely circumstantial, and by no means as strong as in favor of the supposition that the murderer entered the window. Alf. I found my letter to you in the althea bushes by the gate. How did it come there? I did not speak of it to the coroner, but you must explain it to me. Understand me—I am your friend, and desire to aid you as well as Cecy. I think that I understand your presence there. I know you went to see her, and, in all probability were away before the murder occurred; but you may have seen some one about there. At any rate the finding of this letter is an ugly fact, if I am forced to disclose it.

"We must save Miss Morgan. Come down to-morrow as early as you can. Keep your heart up, and let us devote our energies to solving this problem. I am satisfied that Trippe knows something about it. He now lies unconscious in another room.

"Come as soon as you can, for we must try to keep this from the grand jury. Alf. do you need funds? From what you wrote before, I infer that you wanted that sum for a special purpose—a debt perhaps. Do not fear to tell me, for I have been in that fix myself. On second thought, I will inclose an order for \$200 on my merchants. They have some two thousand and odd dollars of mine on hand, and will let you have any sum you need.

"Cecy is still unconscious, but Pierce thinks she is not in danger. I know you will want to rush to her side in this trouble, but come here first. I must speak to you.

"Don't be disheartened.

"Very truly, your friend,

"WILLIAM STANNARD."

It was near ten o'clock on the following day ere this letter came to Alfred Guerry. During the night he had slept little—indeed, it was near daylight when he arrived in Macon from Echaconnee.

It was in vain that he strove to sleep; and after

tossing about for an hour or two upon his bed, he had given up in despair.

Trembling in every limb, pale, a mere ghost of his former self, he dared not enter the breakfast-room until nearly all of the guests had gone.

A few strangers remained, but none that recognized him, and going to the farther corner of the room, he sat with his back to the door.

For many hours he had been without food, yet now he could not eat, and sat with bowed head, balancing the spoon upon the rim of his cup. The morning paper was before him, but he dared not open it, fearing to read there what he most dreaded, the arrest of old Hawks. A brave man would have sought the worst at once; but Guerry was not a brave man, and he had lingered over the fears that throughout this dreadful night had kept him in a state of alarm until the reality seemed too hard for him to bear.

And what if old Hawks were now in the hands of the authorities?

One glimpse of that old man's face racked with agony, peering at him through the bushes; one sound of that imploring voice, had reached his ears, and no effort on his part could banish them from his mind.

Old Hawks had begged him for aid, but a glance at that bloody face had terrified him, and leaving the old man to his fate, he had fled to save himself.

Could he expect that Hawks would show him any mercy now?

Such were the thoughts that flashed through Guerry's brain as he held the paper in his hand, fearing to find, what he most dreaded to find, the arrest of that old man who had been his accomplice in crime.

At length he glanced at the report of the Echaconnee murder, and running his eye rapidly down the column, was greatly relieved to find that Hawks' name was not there. Going back, he read the report more carefully through, and with a great sense of relief.

Presently he paused, and the hand which held the

paper fell upon the table, while the deathly paleness of his face was relieved by a crimson flush. His heart began to beat more freely.

For the moment he felt happier than he had been for many hours.

Was it owing to the natural wickedness of his heart, or to the weakness of his mind, that he felt a sense of joy when he read the verdict of the coroner's jury? Let us judge him as kindly as we can, pitying him for his weakness. He had feared the arrest of old Hawks, knowing that it would be ruin; but now there was a hope that he might get the old outlaw away.

"I must get him away—it is a matter of life and death to me," Guerry said to himself; "but how am I to raise the money. Money! What a cursed thing it is to have none."

Like many men in his condition, Guerry called upon Heaven to aid him, trying to make a compact with his Creator, that, if money was given him now, he would never sin again.

"It would all be over if I could get him out of the way," he thought, bitterly. "They cannot prove anything against Cecy, and she loves me well enough to bear a trial to save me. If she knew all I know she would say so. I will repay her by and by for all the trouble that she has."

His ideas of compensation were vague, indeed, but he could safely promise for the future if he could get present help.

At that moment Stannard's letter caught his eye, and he hastily broke the seal.

Two or three times he read one clause, and for some time he sat dreaming over it. Here was a chance of escape—could he avail himself of it? His evil genius whispered words of hope in his ear that were very sweet, and he turned a deaf ear to the good angel, even then trying to draw him away.

With his usual amount of forethought, Guerry made up his mind to take advantage of the opportunity that had been thrown in his way; and, leaving his breakfast untouched, hurried to his office,

For once, he thought, when rubbing up some India-ink, fortune had favored him; and it seemed to be a good omen for the future. Stannard had left him little to do. It required but one cipher to give him the money that he needed to get old Hawks away, and that cipher he added with a skill that defied detection. Even the allusion which Stannard had made to the sum in the hands of his merchants was favorable to his plan.

It took not long to complete the trifling task that had been left him, and he prepared his things to spend some time away—how long, he could not tell. Writing upon his slate that he had gone into the country for a few days, Guerry locked his office door, and went to the office of Stannard's merchant. They received him cordially.

"I came for some money for Colonel Stannard——"

"Certainly, Mr. Guerry. We have just received a letter from the colonel regarding the matter."

Guerry's heart sank as he heard this, and he thanked fortune that he had not shown the order; but the next words reassured him.

"We understand it perfectly, Mr. Guerry. Colonel Stannard instructs us to advance you what you need. How much will you have to-day?"

"Did not Colonel Stannard speak of this order?"

"He spoke of one; have you it?"

"With a strong effort to keep his hand steady, Guerry handed the order across the desk.

"Colonel Stannard wrote you by the early train. I left him afterward, and came up on the second train. On second thought he concluded to give me an order for this amount as he had some bills to meet."

"I suppose it's all right, Mr. Guerry. We know you, and that is sufficient guarantee for this order. When do you return to Echaconnee?"

"By the first train."

"A dreadful affair that at Morgan's. Of course you——"

The merchant hesitated to complete his sentence, for he remembered that Guerry was to marry Miss

Morgan, and feared that even an allusion to her guilt might give him pain.

"It is, indeed," Guerry remarked, as he took the money from the cashier's hand.

"I suppose you will remain at Echaconnee for the present, Mr. Guerry—are you engaged in this case?"

"I shall probably be the junior counsel," he remarked, and, not desiring to prolong the interview, hastened to say good-day.

"I can appreciate his delicacy," the merchant thought, as Alfred left the house. "It is a dreadful position for a young fellow like him."

Fortune had favored him. Busily engaged in trying to clear Cecy Morgan, it might be weeks before Stannard could find out the sum that had been drawn upon his order, and meantime Alfred hoped to restore it. How this was to be done he had no definite idea; but there was no help for it now, and he must carry himself boldly to the end. In truth, so intent was he upon this one hope of safety which now presented itself, that his mind would not dwell upon the future.

With the price of safety in his pocket, Alfred Guerry rode away from the city, and at nightfall, stood in the Echaconnee woods.

For some time he waited, giving at intervals the signals which old Hawks had taught him, but without eliciting response.

Night was fast coming on. Turning to the old pine, beneath which he had before met Hawks, Guerry saw that it had been blazed afresh, and fancied that there was a signal upon the white surface. Striking a match, Guerry looked at the blaze, and saw these words written upon the wood, in pencil, and by a hand that he knew too well.

"B. swamp, dry-bridge, R. 25 paces cypress blazed, 50 paces—C. log. Sig."

Transferring this to his note-book, Guerry effaced the letters with his knife, and started for the Echaconnee swamp.

It was some two miles to the dry-bridge, but he

had to make a long detour in order to avoid the cattle, and to keep under cover of the woods.

Standing at the end of the bridge, he started to the right, pushing his way through the thick growth of the swamp for twenty-five paces. The blazed cypress was in his way, and a little to the right a narrow path, above which the boughs formed a natural arbor. He crouched low to enter this narrow path, and crept along it until the fallen cotton-wood obstructed the path.

It was intensely dark, and only now and then the feeble light of the stars fell through the dense foliage of the swamp. Sitting upon the cotton-wood to rest, Alfred saw that he was in an open space, completely surrounded by a thick swampy growth. On the left arose a hill, above the tops of the bushes, and, just where the rise began, was a huge pile of fallen trees.

To save his life, Alfred could go no farther into that swamp, and even now his heart was fast sinking. The dismal sounds of the night, the lonely cry of the whip-poor-will, the hoot of an owl, or the quick rustle of the bushes at his feet where some moccasin had been disturbed, were terrors that he could not long endure.

He gave a signal, receiving no response, but after repeating it a few times heard a feeble cry. A deep groan followed, making Guerry's hair rise beneath his hat from fright.

"Hawks!" he called, softly. "Where are you?"

"Here. Come this way—oh!"

A long groan interrupted the voice, but Alfred walked in its direction.

"Climb over the logs," again groaned old Hawks; and, crawling upon his hands and knees, Alfred made his way until a wider space disclosed the faint glimmer of a candle. Guided by the voice within, he let himself down between the logs, and pushed open a narrow door, letting him into a dimly-lighted cabin.

Partly formed by an excavation into the sand-hill, partly by the pile of fallen trees, was a room some eight feet long, in which were two or three pieces

of furniture, arranged with a rude attempt at comfort. A candle in a block of wood was burning beside a low pallet.

Guerry started back with horror as he saw old Hawks lying there, haggard as death, and covered with blood. In his side was a dreadful wound, which the old man was covering with a cloth, after returning to his bed.

"Have you brought me food?" Hawks asked, quickly, with a voice between a growl and a groan.

"No, Hawks; how should I know that you needed it? I've brought you the money."

"Curse your money, and you too. I want something to eat—I want some whisky—I want a doctor—go and get them, you young hound, or I'll beat your brains out."

"How can I get a doctor, Hawks? There's none here now."

"Well, go bring me something to eat. A nice one you are, to leave a man to die this way."

"But, Hawks——"

"Git out of this—go get me some food, or I'll murder yer."

Reaching his hand behind him, old Hawks drew out a rifle, and Guerry sprang to the door.

"Look-a-here, young man, you come back here in no time, or else I'll rouse the neighbors—d'ye hear?"

"I'll come back as soon as I can, Hawks. I have to go a long way to get anything for you—remember that."

"You just git it quick, and come back quick, d'ye hear? I'm a dying man, but ef you don't stand by me, I'll put you in the way of a hangin' 'fore I do go."

"Hawks; you don't suppose I would leave you now, do you? I didn't know that you were hit at all."

"You lie, you young cub! Go git me that whisky."

The old man pointed his rifle at the door, and Guerry hastily drew himself up on the logs. It was after midnight now, but the sky was clearer, and the stars shone brightly through the trees. He saw

a better way of exit, and, pushing through the young cottonwoods, climbed up the hill.

In the distance he saw the dark walls of the castle rising against the sky, and the light in one room, there, pointed out to him Cecy's sick chamber.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN JAIL.

Three days after the murder at the castle the body of old Morgan was laid in the grave, the Rev. Daniel Guerry performing the last rites of Christian burial.

Miss Morgan was still very low, and, although consciousness had partially returned, the doctor had ordered absolute quiet in a darkened room. All reference to the death of her father was forbidden, and not even Stannard was permitted to enter her room. He longed to ask her just one question, but, acting under the doctor's orders, the white nurse had refused him.

Upon Stannard devolved the care of the estate, and, acting for Cecy as if she were a sister, he had sent for the family lawyer to get his advice.

Stannard was taking the lawyer to Morgan's desk, an hour or two after the funeral, when Doctor Pierce came in.

"How is Trippe, Ham; any change in him?"

"None for the worse, certainly. It is a little too soon to say that he is getting better."

"Here is the will," said the lawyer, as he took the document from the desk, and ran his eyes over it.

"Oh, yes;" said Stannard, quickly, "Ham, I must see Miss Morgan. It is absolutely necessary that I should say a few words to her."

"It is not likely she would understand them if you did."

"But see here, I have no authority to act for her, and she should——"

"What is the use, I ask you, Mr. Martin, if there is any one who has a better right?"

"A moment ago, colonel, I should have been in favor of appealing to Miss Morgan; now I agree with the doctor."

— "Why so?" asked Stannard, as he saw some hid-

den meaning in the words. "Why do you say so now."

"Because the property is yours."

Stannard snatched the will from Martin's hands, and ran over it hastily, finding that this was true. Morgan had left the estate to him without reserve, leaving it to his honor to provide for Cecy. For one moment he paused, then tore the will in pieces.

"Oh, colonel, what have you done!" exclaimed the lawyer.

"It is a mistake, Martin, all a mistake. That will was made under a false impression. Under no circumstances would I take one dollar of this property—it belongs to his natural heir, and not to me."

Pierce sprang forward and grasped his hand. "God bless you, Stannard, I honor you for it. As poor as I am, I could not have taken the money from her."

"It was a mistake," said Stannard again. "Martin, you need not pick up the pieces, for I will not have the estate."

"Colonel, let me say a word to you. Miss Morgan is engaged to a young man, whom her father disliked, and who is, I firmly believe, only anxious to get this property."

"You too, Martin! What do you know against him?"

"Perhaps I cannot tell in words, but I distrust him. He may be a good man; if so I will beg his pardon; but I want you to wait until this matter is settled before giving up your claim. Promise me to do this, and I will join you in all you wish."

"Have you seen Guerry?" asked Pierce.

"No, he has not yet been to see her. Yesterday I left word at his father's for him to come over at once, and I hope to see him to-day."

"Colonel Stannard," continued Martin, "I have a purpose in this, and again ask you to agree to it. Miss Morgan need know nothing of it."

"As you wish, Martin. I shall not see her suffer in any way; but beyond that, have your own way."

The doctor went into Miss Morgan's room, and found her much better. She was sitting up in bed,

looking brighter than at any time since that fatal night. It was with no little difficulty that Pierce got her promise to ask no questions, but she gave it at last, and he left her feeling that she would scarcely need his services after that day.

For the next three days Cecy improved rapidly, and was able to walk about her room. Sitting at the window, looking out upon her neglected garden, she tried to recall the events of the past month. That her father was dead she knew now, and was waiting anxiously for the doctor to remove his prohibition, so that she could ask a thousand things that perplexed her.

Stannard spent the greater part of his time at the castle, and proved a true friend to Cecy; but he dreaded the time when he should be forced to break the dreadful news to her.

At length the day came when she was well enough to travel, and Raborn grew pressing. Stannard found her sitting by the window, with her cheek upon her hand. Her first inquiry was for Alfred Guerry.

"He is in Macon, Cecy. I have just received a letter from him. He wants to come to you, he says."

"Poor fellow! I know he does. Tell him—tell him from me that I hope to see him soon; but say that it is best to wait a little."

Stannard had not told her what Guerry had written to him of illness, but promised to give him her message.

"I hope he will come down to-morrow—I am looking for him."

She had been told that Doctor Trippe was ill, and now inquired cordially for him.

"I must tell her," Stannard thought, "but how can I begin."

"Cecy, my friend," he said, aloud, "you must trust me in this, your sorrow—let me be a brother to you."

A look of pain swept across her face, but soon passed away.

"Let me help you, Cecy. Confide in me and I will thank you for it."

His manner, earnest and impressive as it was, affected her more than his words, and whispering a "Heaven bless you," she took his hand and carried it to her lips.

"I cannot tell her," he thought, "it is too bad—too bad."

He could not summon the resolution, and went out to join Raborn on the porch.

"Have you told her?" the latter asked.

"Raborn, I could not; my heart failed me."

"Then I shall have it to do."

"Give me one more day—give me until to-morrow, and I will tell her."

Raborn agreed to this, and Stannard rode home, deeply affected. "I would give my right arm," he cried, "if I could save her from this."

The day was far advanced ere Stannard came, on the following morning to the castle, and entered Cecy's room. She was seated by the window, with some needlework in her lap. Her neatly-fitting black dress, with white collar and cuffs fastened with jet brooch and buttons, made her sad face look more beautiful than ever to his eyes; but as he continued to gaze upon her face, he saw the traces of care, and knew that suffering had told upon her.

Cecy greeted him kindly, and extended her hand.

"Excuse me for not rising, Colonel Stannard."

"Certainly. Pray do not move," he said, drawing a chair near her own.

"Ah! colonel, that look tells me a secret. You think it is because I am weak; but you are mistaken. I'm quite strong now—but you see I have my lap full of work."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Cecy," he replied; yet in his heart he felt that he was far from glad at her rapid recovery.

Very pleasantly she chatted to him, and he listened in silence, scarcely heeding what she said. Cecy observed that his mind was wandering, and that his eyes were looking away into the land of thought.

"Now that is too bad," she said, gayly, rallying him; "this is the second time that you have answered yes, when I'm sure you mean no. Are you building a castle? Will you make me chatelaine?"

Stannard started when thus recalled to himself, and his face grew pale as he looked at her pleasant smile. In an instant she saw that he was distressed, and, dropping her work, took his hand.

"Pray excuse me for speaking so; I was wrong."

"He is thinking of the woman he loves," she thought—"would that I could speak of her to him."

"William—something is wrong with you, something troubles you—is the doctor worse!"

"He is no worse, Cecy—on the contrary, Pierce thinks he is improving. But he will not be up for some weeks, at best."

"What then—may I not ask you? What is it that troubles you? Will you not let me offer the poor solace of my sympathy?"

"Oh! Cecy, you do not know what you ask of me."

He paused for a moment and turned his head away from her, while she looked at him with mute appeal. He saw it as he again caught her eye.

"Cecy, can you bear a great sorrow?"

"Have I not already done so?"

"Yes, but this is different."

She saw that he was agitated.

"It must be about me," she mused, "he would not show his own trouble so."

And her quick mind flew from one thing to another, trying to conjure up some greater sorrow that could come to her. Was it of Alfred? That he could be untrue, never entered her head; she would have doubted Heaven as soon as him. Had something happened to him? It was with a trembling voice, therefore, that she asked if it was about Mr. Guerry.

"No. Cecy," he replied, "it is about yourself alone."

The words gave her inexpressible relief, and she looked up proudly as she said:

"I can bear anything that concerns me alone."

"It is her innocence that speaks," thought Stannard; "she has not an evil thought."

The reflection made his task still harder, and he hesitated to speak of that terrible verdict. Once more she took his hand.

"Though a woman, William, I am no coward. Do not fear to tell me anything that you think I ought to know."

"Cecy," he began at last, his voice shaking with emotion, "do you remember your father's last words?"

"I don't think that I do; at least I cannot recall them now. I remember that he said something which frightened me."

Not yet had memory returned to her so that she could recall the events of that night.

"Try to think, Cecy," he said, kindly; "do you not remember that he said you had killed him?"

"Did he say that?" she asked, quickly. "I don't remember—my mind was very much confused."

She sighed deeply, and musingly continued:

"Poor papa, he thought that I did not do right—but Heaven knows I did try to."

"Heavens!" thought Stannard, "to think this pure, this innocent girl is accused of murder. It makes me a coward to speak to her of the charge."

"I know you did—I am sure you did, Cecy," he said to her; "but did you never think how his words might affect others?"

"Never. I did not know of them until this moment."

Her voice faltered as she said it, for already a glimmer of the truth was breaking on her mind.

"Do they say that I—that I was the cause of his death?"

"Worse than that—Cecy, they say you killed him."

He had said it at last, but sat trembling before her. Springing to her feet, scattering the work upon the floor, she clasped her hands upon her bosom.

"Oh, how could they! How could they think so

badly of me? Did they not see that he had committed suicide in his delirium? But he did not know what he was doing," she added, sadly.

"They thought that you had killed him."

"No, no, William, don't tell me that! Don't say that! How could I do such a thing?" she cried, in her distress.

He took her hands and gently drew her down into the chair; but she bowed her head upon her hands, and sobbed bitterly.

As well as he could, Stannard explained the circumstances to her, showing her why he, also, supposed that a murder had been committed.

"That broken window, Cecy——"

She started suddenly, throwing up her finger as if trying to recall some incident of that night. Like a forgotten dream it came to her, and she remembered the face that she had seen looking through the vines.

"Yes," she said, presently, "the broken window."

"That broken window was not the only evidence that strangers were about the house that night. My opinion was that a man entered the window, and that you fainted when he attacked your father."

"Do you think that a man could have killed my father and I know nothing of it?"

"It might be."

"Stay! Did I dream of a face at that window?"

She pressed her finger against her brow, and made a strong effort to recall some dim impression on her mind.

"Did they say that I called for help? It seems to me now that I did see some one at the window, and that I cried to him for aid. I remember nothing more. I have often dreamed of that face, but thought it only a dream."

"Would you know it again, Cecy?"

"Oh, yes; I am sure that I should. I cannot forget the impression that one look made upon me."

"I was sure that some one came into the yard that night. One of the servants saw a strange man—a young man, he said—hanging about the place."

In an instant it came to her then, and she remem-

bered the meeting with her lover. It must have been Alfred they had seen. What if suspicion should fall upon him also? Her heart nearly ceased beating at the thought. There seemed but one course for Cecy now—she must discredit the idea of murder—and her resolution was speedily taken.

“I can recall more now than I have been able to do at any time,” she said, presently, “and I am sure you are wrong. Poor papa did not know what he was doing, and was going to kill me at first. It was then I fainted. When I opened my eyes again I was sure he had been stabbing himself. William, I feel certain that papa killed himself after he thought that he had killed me.”

“It may be you are right, Cecy. We are doing all we can to clear up the matter. I am going to send for a detective.”

“Pray do not—I had rather you would not do that.”

“Why not, Cecy? Why should we not try to save you from this dreadful trial?”

“Because an innocent person might be suspected.”

A deep blush suffused her face, and Stannard understood her motive.

“I knew she would do that,” he thought; “I was certain of it when I withheld that letter.”

He yielded to her then, but foresaw a time to come when he could find no excuse for so doing.

Cecy wept freely when he told her of the verdict, of the constable's presence, and that she had to go to Perry until the matter could be settled. But one thing kept her spirits up, and that was the thought that she was to suffer for the sake of shielding her lover. All her tears were for him, and her heart ached as she thought of his sorrow when he heard of her arrest for this dreadful crime.

Stannard could not bear her grief, and walked to the window; but in a moment returned to her side and rested his hand upon her chair.

“Cecy, trust me now, will you not? Rely on me, and I will do for you all that I could do for my own sister. It will all come right in the end.”

"I do trust you," she sobbed; "I do rely on you. I will do whatever you tell me. When must I go?"

"To-morrow, Raborn says. I will drive with you in the carriage; he shall ride my horse."

"How good you are to me, William. I can never repay your kindness to me. You can never know how much I appreciate your sympathy."

He bade her good-day and, sick at heart, went into the open air.

"How could they have been such fools?" he said to himself, somewhat illogically, as his mind reverted to the coroner's verdict. "How could they have thrown aside all probabilities?"

Consoling himself with the reflection that his friend Crawford would set the matter right, he rode at a smashing pace homeward.

That night Stannard wrote to his friend and lawyer, Peyton Crawford, giving him an account of the case, and asking him to come to Perry as soon as he could—the next day if possible.

The morning came—the last morning that Cecy was to spend at home for many long months—and Stannard rode over to the castle. The carriage was already at the gate. Passing up the walk he saw Cecy, with her bonnet on, waiting for him; and with a cheerful smile she came out to meet him in the hall.

"Take your own time, Cecy; there is no hurry," he said to her, as she closed the door of her chamber as if for the last time.

"I am ready now, William. If I have to go, the sooner the better. Farewell, you dear old place. Good-by," she said to the servants who were weeping in the hall.

The faithful creatures could bear it no longer, and weeping and moaning, some screaming in hysterics, they fell at her feet and kissed the skirts of her dress.

Offering her hand to each in turn, she sprang away from them and ran down the walk. Stannard's eyes were wet with tears as he gave his hand to help her in the carriage. Her foot was already on the step, but turning suddenly, she ran to the

fence, and returned with a sprig of althea in her hand. Just touching it to her lips, Cecy placed the sprig in her bosom and entered the coach.

"That was a sad ride," Stannard said to himself, for many a day thereafter. "It was a sad ride—perhaps the saddest that I ever had in my life. Yet how well she bore it!"

For a few miles he endeavored to entertain her; but she was silent and sorrowful. He saw that it was only with a great effort she conversed or listened to him, and that it would be charitable to leave her to herself. With a few cheerful words he left her for a seat with the driver, and lighting a cigar, he smoked the weary miles away.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALFRED GUERRY INDUCES MISS MORGAN TO GIVE HIM
THE CONTROL OF HER PROPERTY.

It was a great relief to Stannard's mind when, toward nightfall, he saw the houses grow more numerous along the road, and at length the town itself.

The sun was down and the night fast coming on when they drove into Perry, the county seat of Houston. But if he had rejoiced to find the journey drawing to a close, his heart fell as Raborn stopped the carriage before the county jail.

Without a word, Cecy left the carriage and entered the door of her prison. Stannard went in to speak to the jailer, and succeeded in winning his sympathy so that he promised a private room, and the attention of his wife. After seeing this room, Stannard bade her good-night and drove to the hotel. But he was uneasy and restless; his room oppressed him; and taking a cup of tea only, he lighted a cigar and went out for a walk.

Cecy had borne herself nobly through this terrible trial, and even in her little prison room spoke cheerfully of it, declaring that it was better than she had expected. Before Stannard she would not show her grief.

"If I give up," she said to herself; "if my courage fails me, it will make him feel all the worse—and he is so good to me."

But when the door was closed upon him her powers of endurance failed entirely. Throwing herself at full length upon the little pallet, Cecy buried her face in the pillow and wept without restraint.

It was a dreadful thought that she was in prison for such a crime; yet her distress did not proceed from any fear of consequences to herself. Her thoughts were all of him who must be nearly

breaking his heart over her troubles, and she tried to imagine his feelings when he heard of her arrest.

"I shall soon see him," she said to herself; "he will soon be near me, at least. Could I know that he is in this town I would not murmur."

There was not a suspicion of his loyalty in her mind; and she felt that, as sure as he was alive, Alfred would rush to her side. For a moment she did wonder why he had not been to see her at home; but love makes many excuses, and she soon held him guiltless.

The jailer's wife brought in a cup of tea, and tried to be of service to her; but Cecy declined her aid for the night, promising to ask for anything that she might want in the morning.

Still the woman lingered by the door.

"The sheets are fresh, miss, I had them well aired myself," she said, with an effort to show sympathy. "We use this room for our own friends—none of them," pointing through the wall toward the prisoners' cells, "none of them ever get in here. I put the water in fresh for you. Do you drink cistern water, miss?"

"Oh, yes," Cecy answered, wearily; "it is all the same to me. You are very good. I shall not want anything to-night."

"Miss Morgan, I don't think any harm of you anyway. I'm so sorry you are here. Mayn't I do something for you?"

"Believe me, Mrs.—Mrs.——"

"Harris."

"Mrs. Harris, believe me, I want nothing to-night. The greatest kindness that you can do me is to leave me to myself."

The kind-hearted woman looked at her sadly, and turned toward the door.

"Stay," Cecy said, before she had closed the door; "perhaps you can do me a service. If a note comes for me bring it up at once—never mind how late. Can you do that for me, Mrs. Harris?"

"Indeed I will, miss; I'll do anything for you."

"I feared it might be against the rules. Do not

hesitate to refuse me, Mrs. Harris, if I ask anything which you may not grant."

The key grated in the lock as the jailer's wife closed the door, sending the cold chills through Cecy's frame; and casting her eyes up at the narrow window she saw that it was iron-barred.

For the first time since her arrival Cecy fully realized that she was in prison awaiting trial for murder.

Stannard had written to Alfred Guerry on the morning of the day that he had told Cecy of the charge against her, and the letter had reached him about the hour that they were starting for Echaconnee. Thus far he had avoided Stannard on the plea of illness.

"I took cold," he wrote, some days after the murder; "I took cold coming from home, here, and have been laid up ever since. I would come to your house at once if I could; but am confined to my room.

"I can explain to you about the letter. I did go to see Cecy that night, but left before it was fairly dark. I missed the letter, and would have gone back for it, had I thought it of the slightest consequence. I do not see that it can serve any good purpose to make this public; but if you think so, let me know before you do.

"I got some money from your merchants, and will soon repay you. Please keep me informed of all that transpires, until I am well enough to join you."

Stannard had not a suspicion of the truth of these words; but had he known that Guerry's eyes were peering at him from the swamp, every time he rode over to the castle, Stannard could not have doubted that it was his duty to put the detectives on this track.

Guerry knew that he had nothing to fear from Stannard. The last letter, giving an account of Cecy's trouble when told of the verdict, was an anxious one to him. The time had come when he must act a part before those he had wronged or lose her forever.

Promising old Hawks to return in two days at the most, he made ample provision for his absence,

and started for Perry. He arrived there just as Stannard was returning from his walk.

Guerry was strangely excited as he took Stannard's offered hand, and quickly asked for Cecy.

The usual crowd of tavern loungers began to crowd around them, hoping to catch some words about the Echaconnée murder. Stannard started toward the hall.

"Come away, Alf," he said, in a low tone; "come to my room. We cannot talk here."

"Tell me first, Stannard—I want to see her."

"Not to-night—it is impossible. They would not let you in."

"Who would not let me in? Where is she staying?" he asked, petulantly, tapping his boot nervously with his riding-whip.

"At the jail."

"In jail!" he cried; "In jail! Oh, Stannard!"

He could say no more, but turning to a pillar, bowed his head against it. Cecy Morgan in jail, when he had the power to release her! At that moment the enormity of his offenses came home to him.

"Come in, Alf; come—we are attracting a crowd here."

The last words were said in an undertone, but permitting Stannard to take his arm, the miserable man walked into the office. At the stairs he paused; feeling as he did then, he dare not talk with Stannard about the murder.

"One moment," he said, "Stannard, at least I may send my card to her, so she can get it early in the morning."

"Perhaps you had better. It may spare her a few unhappy moments."

"Leave me to-night, Stannard, I cannot talk with you. I have been ill, and this has quite upset me. I did not think she would be there."

"It is best, perhaps," Stannard replied, "her own sense of delicacy would keep her from going to a private house in charge of a constable. She is very comfortable there, she says."

"May be you are right. Let me leave you now, please; I will see you to-morrow."

The two men separated for the night, but not to sleep. It was late when Guerry entered, but for some hours after Stannard heard him pacing up and down his room.

"Poor fellow," he thought. "I sympathize with him fully. I do not wonder that he was excited. I could cry like a child over her sorrows, just now; and he must find them harder to bear."

Meantime, Cecy sat upon her pallet, deep in thought.

"To-morrow will be a happy day with me if he comes. I have so much to say to him."

The grating of the key in the lock interrupted her reverie, and Mrs. Harris came in with a candle. She held out a card to Cecy; with a joyful bound she sprang forward to take it, and read there the name of her lover. A few words were written to tell her that he should come to her in the morning, and telling her to keep her spirits up—words that brought comfort and cheer to Cecy's heart.

"He is all I have in the world to love me," she said, sadly, as she went back to her little bed. "I can sleep now, with this hope for to-morrow."

And, placing the card beneath her pillow, she did sleep as calmly as if in her own luxurious chamber at Echaconnee.

Stannard found the room empty when he went to see Guerry on the following morning. For the purpose of avoiding him Alfred had started early, and for some hours walked in the country beyond the town.

Cecy had long waited for him when she heard his step upon the stair. He had gone there hoping to get relief from all the difficulties that then surrounded him.

"She loves me to distraction," he flattered himself, "and will do whatever I say. With her authority to act for the estate, I can raise the money I need. She will not refuse me."

Not a doubt entered his mind that Cecy would now give him entire control of her property, and he

went into her presence with a lighter heart than had throbbed in his breast for many a day.

At length she heard his step at the door. With both hands pressed upon her bosom, to still the beatings of her heart; with parted lips and wide open eyes, she stood as he entered, and came toward her with extended arms; and then she somehow found her head upon his breast, but dimly conscious of the words that he was whispering in her ear.

It was a blissful moment to her then, and scarcely dared she move for fear of destroying the illusion. It was true, she thought, that she had no one in the wide world but him to console and sympathize with her. Yes, there was one other on whom she could rely; but his heart was given to another, and she had no claim upon him.

"I can offer you one chair, Alfred," she said, cheerily; "sit here by me while I occupy my pallet."

"Oh, Cecy, I am so sorry to see you here."

"It cannot be helped now, Alfred—they will not keep me long. You know that I am innocent, and the truth must be known sooner or later. Alfred, were you shot on that dreadful night—were you badly hurt?"

"I was not hit at all."

"Not at all? Why did you cry out so? Were you frightened for me?"

"I did not cry out, Cecy; I did not think you in danger. I was half a mile away when I heard the gun."

She looked into his eyes, and for a moment felt a shade of disappointment, as she thought that he had gone away and left her to struggle alone with a maniac.

"Alfred, then they are right—my father was murdered."

He had not thought before to what her questions were leading, but was now on his guard.

"I thought that he killed himself; but, Alfred, as sure as we live, he shot some one in the garden. I heard him groan and cry out—then I saw a face at the window before I fainted."

She described the face to him so clearly that he

could not fail to recognize the portrait of old Hawks. A deathly pallor overspread his face, and he could not repress a shudder.

Cecy was startled by the sudden change in him, and instinctively shrank from his side. For the first time there came into her heart a doubt of her own love.

"Alfred," she said, "what is the matter? Do you know anything about it?"

"Oh, no, no, Cecy; do you suppose I should let you suffer here if I did?"

His voice was hoarse and shaking, but he took her hand and drew her nearer to him.

"Don't speak of that, Cecy; I cannot bear it. I feel as if your life was again menaced. Oh, why did I leave you that night?"

His distress seemed real. Was it, indeed, for her that he trembled? His words reassured her, but never again could she forget the phantom which came between them at that moment.

"Cecy," he said at length, "what have you done about the estate?"

"Nothing at all—what should I do?"

"Some one must attend to it for you; have you appointed any one?"

"I have not once thought of it, Alfred. Don't speak of that now."

It made his heart leap with joy when he heard that he was in time.

"But it is necessary, Cecy," he continued; "you must appoint a trustee to look out for your interests. You should do it at once."

"Can I appoint Colonel Stannard?" she asked, after a pause.

"You can if you wish; but——" he knew not what to say. Would she defeat him after all?

"But what, Alfred?" she asked, seeing his hesitation.

"I fear he does not like me. To my face he is friendly enough, but behind my back I hear that he does not speak well of me."

"Oh! Alfred! that cannot be. He is an honorable

man, and would not do such a thing. You must be mistaken."

"I hope that I am, but until I am sure of it, I would rather he should not have control of your property. Will you not trust me with it?"

Cecy could not speak at once. Again she felt the chill that had before fallen upon her heart, with a pain there which she had not felt then. She could not refuse him.

"Yes, Alfred," she said, her voice shaking with emotion. "I will do as you wish. Certainly, I can trust you; why ask me that? Do I not give you myself? What, then, is this property to me?"

"My own dear girl," he said, warmly, "it is for your sake that I do it. Who is there would be more careful of your interest than I? Shall I not share it with you some time?"

"Yes, Alfred," she whispered, but the words choked her, and she tried hard to drive back the tears that were springing to her eyes.

"You are of age, Cecy, and a written authority from you will be sufficient. We may be able to get paper and ink here."

He stepped to the door which had been standing ajar during his interview with Cecy, and called Mrs. Harris from the passage. The kind-hearted woman looked sadly into Cecy's eyes as she passed her, and gave an audible sigh ere she crossed the threshold.

In a few moments Harris himself came in with the paper.

"I am glad you have come—oh—what is the name? Harris, yes! Harris. Miss Morgan is to make me her trustee. You can witness that it is a free act on her part. Is it not, Miss Morgan?"

Frightened at these words, Cecy looked up in astonishment.

"Yes—that is—yes, of course. What am I to write, Mr. Guerry?"

He dictated the paper to her, and soon folded it in his pocket. Not long did he remain, now he had accomplished his purpose; not one affectionate word did he speak to her; but delaying the jailer until his

good-by had been said, hurriedly passed from the room.

Cecy felt her heart freezing in her bosom as she listened to his step upon the stairs, and tried in vain to frame some excuses for him.

"He said that he would come to-morrow," she thought; "but how can I wait so long. I must know what it is that has caused this change in him. Is the change in me?"

Her reverie was interrupted by Mrs. Harris, who stole back to her side, and took the chair in which Alfred had sat. One touch of her hand upon Cecy's hair softened her aching heart, and bowing her head in Mrs. Harris' lap, she wept freely.

"Oh, Miss Morgan! forgive me, but I heard it all," said the sympathizing woman. "I heard it all, and I am sorry you gave him that paper. I do not like——"

"Stop! Mrs. Harris, don't say any more. Don't make me regret that I have felt so kindly and grateful to you. Mr. Guerry is to be my husband."

"Forgive me, Miss Morgan; I did not know it."

"Never mind. It is nothing," said Cecy, embracing her; "I love you for your kindness to me. Let me alone a little while now; but come and sit with me by and by."

"For her sake I wish it was the other," Mrs. Harris said to herself, as she again turned the key upon the weeping girl within.

CHAPTER XV.

ALFRED GUERRY RECEIVES HIS FIRST CHECK IN HIS GAME.

For many a day Alfred Guerry had not felt so free from dread, as he did when he went to seek Stannard at the hotel, with Miss Morgan's authority to act as her trustee in his pocket.

He felt safe now, and determined to go at once to Echaconnee and take charge of old Morgan's effects. That there was paper or stock of some kind upon which he could realize at once, he did not doubt; and no better excuse could he have than Miss Morgan's desire for ready money to meet the expenses of her trial.

Stannard's money returned, old Hawks dead or out of the country, Trippe in his grave, as he probably would be in a few days, if all accounts were true, and a fair career in life would open before him.

Even when reflecting upon the difficulties to be surmounted by the means now placed in his hands he saw how troubles had accumulated.

Two men were sitting in Stannard's room when Alfred entered.

"Come in, Alf! come in!" said Stannard, cordially; "I am glad to see you. I went to your room this morning; but you were out. I can appreciate your anxiety. Mr. Martin you know, I believe," said Stannard, turning to the lawyer. "This is my friend Guerry, Mr. Crawford."

Peyton Crawford had just arrived in Perry, and was speaking of Guerry a moment before the latter came in. He extended his hand cordially; but Alfred shrank before his keen black eye.

"Have you seen Miss Morgan, Alf?" asked Stannard.

"I have just left her. She bears her troubles wonderfully well."

"Like a saint, indeed. Poor girl, how I pity her. Alf, we must fit that room up for her to-morrow if there is an upholsterer in Perry."

"Y-e-s!" Guerry answered, slowly, for want of something else to say; "yes—certainly."

He felt uncommonly squeamish under the steady gaze of those black eyes, which seemed to look through and through him.

Peyton Crawford, Stannard's friend and attorney, was a young man, for one who had attained so wide a reputation at the bar, and but a year or two, perhaps, older than Stannard himself.

Few could look upon his handsome face without being struck by it. His round face and olive skin, his keen black eye, in which lurked a pleasant smile, his straight black hair, thrown back from a broad brow, and his upright, compact form, made him a perfect type of manly beauty.

Alas! that I must say, writing these words many years after the Echaconnee tragedy, that this Apollo—with a young wife, with fame, with wealth, with all that could make life happy in his golden prime—now sleeps in a soldier's grave.

Crawford had come up from Columbus at his friend's request, but at no small loss to himself. Stannard had the utmost confidence in Crawford's attainments, and for many years had intrusted all his business to him.

"So the grand jury have found a bill," said Crawford, presently. "I suppose, Martin, it was on the verdict solely."

"It is preposterous; upon my word it is. I never saw such stupidity.

"Perhaps so, Stannard. We must try and prove it so."

For the next half hour the four men went over the case together, Alfred maintaining strict silence. With those wonderful eyes upon him, he dare not trust himself to speak, and every moment feared that Stannard would refer to the letter.

The two lawyers could not join in Stannard's

belief that Miss Morgan would be released without trial, and foresaw difficulties which must be overcome by solid testimony.

Presently Crawford asked if there was any evidence in her favor now. Alfred spoke quickly:

"Certainly—there is Stannard's."

"And his testimony is, if I understand it, the very thing upon which the accusation is based."

Stannard had been sitting with his arms folded, intently listening to the discussion between the lawyers; but this answer roused him. He was obliged to acknowledge the truth of this, but did so with a groan.

"I fear you are right, Crawford. The truth is, I know very little about the case; but that little seems to—to——"

"I understand it perfectly," said Crawford. "Without intending to say anything which could be construed as against her, you were mainly instrumental in procuring her committal. The difficulty is to prove suicide, or to show that she is not guilty of murder. We must have a detective to look up the case."

Without intending it, Crawford had fastened his eyes upon Alfred's face as he uttered these words, and was surprised to see the pallor that had come over it. The rapid blinking of Guerry's eyes produced a strong impression upon Crawford's mind.

Moving his chair so that he could watch him furtively, he noted every expression of Guerry's face.

"Unless he can prove an alibi," the lawyer thought, "I fear this fine fellow will change places with that girl soon."

"Crawford, what can we do?" asked Stannard. "What must we do first? Trippe might have helped us; but he is on his back."

The last words were uttered in a low tone, and as if to himself.

"What do you say about Trippe?"

"I said that he might have given us some help, but for his accident. Peyton, I am sure that he knows the secret of this whole affair. He began to

tell me something that morning, but we were interrupted. I'll wager anything that he could give us a clew in five minutes."

"How is he getting on?"

"I can hardly tell you—better, I believe; but I can't say that the doctor gives us much hope. He has brain fever. It may be that my hopes are too bright; but I think that his eye shows signs of consciousness. I believe he knows a good deal of what passes around him."

"Who is attending him?"

"Doctor Pierce."

"What, Ham Pierce, of Fort Valley? I know him intimately. Trippe could not be in better hands. What does Pierce say about him?"

"I can't tell you, really—he says very little; but I'm sure he thinks Trippe good for another month or two in bed."

Martin, the eldest brother of the party, gave an expressive grunt, and sank again into his thoughtful mood.

"Trippe recognized his wife yesterday," Stannard continued, "and asked where he was; but Pierce forbids her to talk with him."

"I am going to Fort Valley on business to-morrow, and will see—what time does Pierce come up?" Crawford asked, quickly changing his remark.

"On the morning train," Stannard replied; "he returns on the next."

"He's at home by one o'clock, then?"

"By half-past one, at least. Do you know Mrs. Pierce?"

"Very well. I know her family, and have charge of the miserable pittance they allow her. Her brothers treated her badly, because they were opposed to her marriage. She is a true woman, though, and cheerfully sacrificed everything to marry the man she loved. His family think the world of her."

"She is a true woman," said Stannard, warmly; "a noble woman too. I like her much."

"I was going on to say," continued Crawford, "that I have to visit Fort Valley to-morrow, and

will have a talk with Pierce. I may call at Echaconnee in a day or two."

"Do so, Peyton. You could not do me a greater favor. It is a long time, Peyton, since you have been to my place."

"I know it is, Stannard, but you must remember that I am not a man of leisure like yourself. I cannot leave work with an overseer, and go away when I wish."

"Nonsense; all lawyers take a holiday now and then—is it not so, Martin? You know that you could come up for a week's shooting if you wanted to. Send law to the dogs and come stay with me."

"Perhaps there is something besides law which keeps Crawford so much at home," suggested Martin; "I imagine there is a lady in the case."

"I heard something of that," said Stannard. "How is it, Peyton, are you badly *Hurt*?"

"Hard hit, I fear," replied Crawford, laughing at this play upon a name.

"Come! Come!" called Martin; "stick to your brief. Don't talk nonsense before a man who has gray hair and eight children. Miss Morgan must be our first care."

"You are right; we should think of nothing else. What is the first thing to be done?"

"To make her comfortable in the jail, I should say, Stannard."

"Right again, Martin. Alf and I will attend to that, you two must arrange the other matters."

"Martin, I must go back to Columbus," said Crawford, "but I will send up a detective to you."

Again he saw Alfred's eyelids twitching unpleasantly.

"Appling is a good man if not engaged—will you meet him at Echaconnee? For some time we can do nothing but work up the case."

"I will meet Appling," interposed Stannard, "Martin lives too far away. He can make my house a base of operations. I must go home in the morning—you can remain here, Alf?"

Guerry had scarcely spoken during this inter-

view, and a deep blush suffused his face when thus appealed to.

"I cannot," he replied, with a stammer; "I am obliged to raise some money for Miss Morgan, and must see to it at once."

"You need not leave town for that," Stannard replied, "I can easily raise the money here. Let me give you a check on my merchants." Stannard took a blank check from his note-book. "How much do you want for her? I expect De Wolf, down stairs, will give you the money on it; if not you can get it from Thompson, the hardware man."

Alfred was now really alarmed. Another check upon the merchants from whom he had already drawn so large a sum would certainly bring his forgery to light. He must keep Stannard and his checks away from the merchants.

"Oh, no, no! Colonel Stannard, I could not take any more money from you."

"But this is for Miss Morgan. She is welcome to all that she needs. What is the figure? Come, Alf, don't be foolish about so small a matter."

"Were it for myself, I might not hesitate," replied Guerry, stooping to a lie; "but this is for Miss Morgan. She expressly charged me not to get the money from you."

Stannard put back the check, and abruptly turned to the window.

"Don't feel hurt, I beg you. She was very particular in telling me not to let you know of this; and I should have refused more firmly, without giving a reason for so doing."

"Mr. Guerry," asked Crawford, fixing his eyes upon Alfred's face, "do you intend to get this money from your private means?"

"Oh, no! Stannard, I hope you do not think hard of this—I am sure Miss Morgan would never forgive me, if she heard how awkwardly I have bungled with her words."

"She need never know it. I shall never mention it to her." Stannard replied, with a trembling lip.

"I must go at once to Echaconnee, on business

for Miss Morgan," continued Alfred; "she has made me her trustee."

He took her authority from his pocket, and extended it for inspection. Martin took the paper from his hand.

"This is waste paper, Mr. Guerry," said the lawyer, after reading it carefully through. "Were you not aware that Morgan left a will?"

"I don't see that it will make any difference," said the young man, sullenly.

"It would not, perhaps, under certain conditions. For what property do you propose to act as Miss Morgan's agent, or trustee?"

"I cannot understand such questions; of course it is for the home estate—for the castle property. In fact, for all her property."

"You are deceiving yourself, Mr. Guerry—Miss Morgan is a poor girl. So far as I know, she has not five hundred dollars in the world."

"What do you mean?" Guerry cried, rising from his chair in great excitement; "what is the use of all this humbug with me? Do you know why I have charge of Miss Morgan's property?"

"Sit down, Mr. Guerry," said the lawyer, calmly. "One of the first things a lawyer has to learn, is to control his temper. Take my advice—and I was at the bar before you were born—never show your hand in any case, no matter how trifling."

"I don't understand you. What do you mean by 'showing my hand?' I am a gentleman, sir, and want to be treated like one."

"Sit down, Mr. Guerry," said Crawford, who had been sitting with folded arms, keenly watching the young man's face. Stannard had turned again toward them, and was standing with both hands upon the back of his chair. "No one has questioned you, that I am aware. There is no necessity for a declaration like that."

Those black eyes were too strong for Alfred's comfort, and subduing his anger for the moment, he sank back into his chair.

These fellows are trying to discredit my author-

ity," he thought; "but they will find themselves mistaken. They can't bully me."

"I apologize for my expression, Mr. Guerry," Martin continued. It is a slang phrase, I admit; but as an old lawyer, I wanted to tell you that excitement, in any case, is sure to betray your——"

"Mr. Martin," interrupted Guerry, angrily, "I am not in need of your advice. When I am you may depend upon a fee from me. I admire your talents, but at present would rather you confined yourself to the case in hand."

Crawford caught Martin's eye at that moment, and knew that he had a purpose in thus irritating Guerry. He understood it thoroughly.

"I am ready to apologize in full," said Martin, with his usual calmness, "I hope that I have not offended you, Mr. Guerry?"

"Let us proceed with this business," said Alfred, sulkily; "what were you saying about Miss Morgan's property?"

"I said, that to my knowledge, she has not five hundred dollars in the world."

"Now, Martin, what's the use of talking so? You are acquainted with the estate, and know that there is not an incumbrance upon it."

"Granted; but I spoke of a will—Morgan made a will some years before his death, disinheriting his daughter——"

"Disinheriting Miss Morgan!" cried Guerry, again springing to his feet. "Who—I don't believe it—it is not true—we shall——"

"Mr. Guerry," interrupted Crawford, "will you please be silent!"

He quailed before those eyes, and Martin continued:

"I objected to the will when I drew it up; but Morgan explained the matter to me in a way that removed all my scruples. Things did not turn out as Morgan hoped; but unfortunately he had not destroyed the will. I have it in my possession at this moment."

"Who is the—who then," Alfred stammered, and,

seeing that Martin was in earnest, grew deathly pale.

"Who has the estate? you were going to ask. Every inch of property that Morgan owned now belongs, by will, to Colonel Stannard."

"He has no right—we shall dispute the will," Alfred cried, striking the table with his hand. "You are all against her, every one of you."

"Gently, gently, Mr. Guerry; we will bear much from you; but you are now going too far."

Stannard was much distressed. Not yet had he the faintest suspicion of Alfred's honesty, and he rather admired the spirit with which he stood up for Cecy's rights.

"I am sure that I should do the same," he thought, "were she to be my wife. This is torture to him, and I cannot permit it to go on."

"There is no necessity for that, Alf. Listen to me a moment, I——"

"Colonel Stannard," interrupted Martin, quickly, "will you do me the favor to let me speak!"

Crawford joined in the request with a look, and Stannard took his seat, pitying Alfred from the bottom of his heart.

"Let me finish my story. This will is now in my possession, and will hold good in law. Miss Morgan cannot touch a dollar of this property without Colonel Stannard's permission. What do you mean to do with this paper?"

"I shall see Miss Morgan before I answer that question. I will see her at once."

He seized his hat and was near the door when Stannard stepped to his side.

"Alf, for Heaven's sake don't speak of this now! She has trouble enough without hearing of more. Any amount of money that you want will be furnished. Here, Crawford—no! Martin, will you not advance the money?"

"As much as she needs. You can promise her any sum she wants, and I will bring it to-morrow."

"See that, Alf? You can have it to-day. Surely, Cecy—Miss Morgan would not object to my indorsement. I beg you not to tell her."

"Let me go, Colonel Stannard—I'll not promise you. I believe you are all conspiring to defraud her," he almost shrieked, as, tearing away from Stannard's hand, he slammed the door in his face.

Quickly opening the door, Stannard called to him; but Crawford stopped a further effort.

"Oh, Martin! why did you carry the thing so far? Let me go and tell him the truth—let me tell him that I will not have the estate before he goes to her."

"Stannard," said Crawford, impressively, "as sure as you live that young fellow is guilty."

"Peyton, that cannot be!"

But a new light seemed to break on Stannard's mind, and he stopped in consternation.

"Perhaps he is not guilty of the murder—I do not think he has the courage for that; but he knows something about it."

"You see now—you can see yourself, Stannard," said Martin, "that he thinks more of Miss Morgan's money than he does of her."

"He is guilty of more than that," interposed Crawford, "or I am greatly mistaken. Was there nothing said about him at the inquest?"

"Nothing at all. Simmons acted like a fool. He would not listen to reason."

"Think a minute, Stannard—was there no evidence to show that he was there that night? Was there no negro gossip to give a clew?"

He could not again run the risk of injuring Cecy by withholding what he knew, and at length determined to speak of the letter. He told them the circumstances, with Alfred's explanation.

"I knew it," said Martin, slapping his knee; "I felt sure of it. Have you that letter?"

Stannard took the letters from his pocket, and the two lawyers read them carefully.

"What is this?" exclaimed Crawford, suddenly; "you gave him five hundred dollars? What in the world was that for?"

"I can't tell—here is his other letter asking for it."

"Stannard, my friend, you have made a dreadful mistake; you have done an injury to that girl."

"Peyton, I would not have done it for the world under other circumstances. She tried to shield him, even to me; and hinted to me what he tells me there, that he went away before dark. I believed them. He is to marry her, and—and I should—I would have given him ten times as much for her sake."

Both men understood his feelings thoroughly, and touched as lightly upon the subject as they could; but they shook his faith in Alfred at last, and he was deeply shocked at the suspicions which they revealed to him. If Alfred were, indeed, the villain that these skillful men would make him, then must he watch carefully over Cecy. He could not leave her now.

"Martin," said Stannard, at length, "this thing has quite upset me. I wonder how many more horrors there are to be in this affair. I cannot go home, now; but you go to my house and attend to Appling when he comes up. I give you the letters—but remember I will have nothing to do with the matter until you convince me by something more than suspicion. It seems incredible to me—why just look at it, he had everything in the world to make him an honest man!"

"I thought of him from the first," said Crawford; "I am sure he is a bad young fellow, and not worthy of any really noble girl."

"Well! let us work," said Martin, rising; "I have a long ride before me before night."

"I must go, too. Stannard, you shall hear from me, or see me in a day or two."

"Come up if you can, Peyton, I wish you would."

"I'll try. At any rate make your mind easy; we shall leave no trace unfollowed. Good-by."

"Do all you can for her, Peyton," said Stannard, with trembling lip, as he shook hands with his friends in the passage.

CHAPTER XVI.

CECY'S PRISON LIFE.

For nearly an hour after the lawyers left him, Stannard sat in the same spot thinking of the developments of that day. Could it be true that Alfred Guerry was after Cecy's money? Was he really concerned in the murder of her father?

"Heaven forbid!" he said to himself; "if she loves him it would break her heart. I must see her at once; yet how can I tell her of this? I cannot."

Taking his hat, Stannard went down stairs and inquired for Guerry, learning that he had gone away on horseback some time before. The paper which he had obtained from Cecy had been left on the table, and with this in his possession, Stannard went to the jail. He found Cecy with a note in her hand, sitting by the narrow window.

"Oh! I am glad you have come," she said, extending her hand; "have you seen Mr. Guerry?"

"Ye—yes! that is, I saw him an hour or so ago. He was at my room."

She cast her eyes upon the floor and for the moment made no reply.

"William, you are so good to me that I do not like to worry you with my troubles, but——"

"Cecy, you would not feel so if you knew how happy I feel when serving you."

A crimson flush suffused her face, and again she paused. He pressed her to call on him for any service.

"Do you think you could find Mr. Guerry?" she asked; presently.

"I think so—I will try, if he has not left town."

"Perhaps he has not yet gone. This morning I gave him a paper which I wish to get again. I fear I have made a great mistake."

It was not alone to the paper that she now referred, and once more she dropped her eyes upon

the floor. He took the paper that Alfred had left from his pocket.

"Is this the one you mean?"

"Oh, yes; that is it. How—how did you get it?"

"He left it on the table in my room."

Cecy was puzzled. His anxiety to get this paper had frightened her, and now he had left it with Colonel Stannard—what could have been his object?

"I may be mistaken," she thought, "and I will not act hurriedly. He said that he would return to-morrow; let this rest until then."

"Have you seen Alfred since——"

"Since I gave him this?" she asked, as he hesitated, holding up her paper; "No, I have not seen him, but I have a note from him. He tells me—you can read it."

She extended the note to him, and he read:

"DEAR MISS MORGAN:—I am obliged to go to Macon on business and shall not be able to see you before to-morrow evening. I shall return as early as possible to-morrow.
ALFRED GUERRY."

No longer could Stannard doubt. He saw from the tone of this note that Guerry was already thinking of deserting Cecy, and he thanked Martin for his sagacity. Yet even then he could not give up all hope. She loved him, and if her heart clung to him as he thought, he would not let them be separated in this way. But he could say nothing.

Cecy took the note from his hand, but spoke of something which had no connection with the subject they were upon; and at that moment Mrs. Harris called to them at the door:

"It is a man with some things," she said, "some things for you, Miss Morgan."

Cecy looked up quickly into Stannard's eyes, and knew at once that they were from him.

"Yes, Cecy, I sent them. Make yourself comfortable here. I will leave you now, but send for me at any time. Mrs. Harris, will you not send me word if Miss Morgan wants anything?"

He was already in the passage when the promise was given, and tried to push a bank-note into the woman's hand; but she refused it promptly. Catch-

ing up a rosy-cheeked boy who was clinging to his mother's skirts, Stannard managed to transfer the note to the little fellow's pocket, and ran down the stairs.

Cecy's heart was too full for words, and when the jailer's wife entered, she was sobbing with her face buried in her hands. Rousing herself as the man came in with the furniture, she stood watching it, piece by piece; and it was with a strong effort that she kept back her tears at this evidence of his goodness to her.

Deeply distressed at what he had seen, and heard, and felt, that day, Stannard walked back to his room and tried to think over all that had occurred. To him the last half hour with Cecy had been worse than all; for the sight of her face had reminded him of the love that he must crush from his heart, and her resignation had touched him deeply.

"Why should I feel this pain?" he said to himself; "did I not once forfeit all right to happiness in this life? How true it is—the saying that there are no sadder words than 'it might have been!'"

Until the twilight shadows were deepening in his room he sat in reverie, with his cheeks resting upon his hand; and thoughts of his shipwrecked life crowded fast upon his mind. For a long time he sat there, enduring mortal agony.

At length he grew calmer with resignation, and lighting a cigar, went out into the street. The night was lovely. In all parts of the sky the stars shone brilliantly, lighting the town as if by strong moonlight, and bringing out the shadows on the sandy soil in all their varied forms.

From the gardens rose the perfume of thousands of flowers, while from the low marshes around came the music of croaking frogs with the sad notes of the whip-poor-will.

A tame mocking-bird gave out one sweet strain as Stannard passed the porch in which its cage was hanging, and he paused to listen. The whole air seemed musical and full of sweet odors.

He walked on in silence, scarcely knowing or caring whither, and at last found himself opposite

the prison. His mind flew back to the brief time he had spent there, a few hours before; and leaning against a tree, with folded arms, he gazed up at Cecy's little window.

Within, that little room had greatly changed since he was there. Thinking of him, of her past hopes, of her disappointment, of his goodness to her now, Cecy had sat long by that window; and leaning her head upon her hands, she lost herself in reverie.

She started at length, thinking that she must have fallen asleep there, and glanced out into the street. But in an instant she sprang away and sank down into a chair. She had recognized the watching form without, and a painful thrill shot through her heart.

In that moment she knew his love as well as if he had told it to her.

"I love him yet!" she sobbed to herself; "I can deceive myself no longer. I have been mad!"

Bowing her head for a moment, Cecy gave way to her tears.

"I could have loved him so," she thought, "for he is good, noble, and generous. He is one who wears well the grand old name of gentleman. But it is too late; I am not worthy his love. It might have been, if—if——"

She could not complete the thought, but blamed herself bitterly for her conduct in the past.

And "it might have been, but it is too late now," were the sorrowful words uttered by Stannard as he walked back to his hotel.

Of course the Echaconnee tragedy made a great stir in the county, as well as in all that part of the State; and for many days the newspapers were filled with the particulars, as gleaned from "reliable gentlemen," giving the public to understand that there was scarcely a doubt of Miss Morgan's guilt.

It turned out, they went on to say, that Mr. Morgan opposed her marriage with a certain young limb of the law, and that she had been heard to threaten her father if he opposed the match. It

was only just to say, however, that this young man knew nothing of her intentions, and had been greatly shocked when he heard of the murder. He had done all that could have been expected of him since her incarceration; but no one could blame him now for considering his engagement canceled.

Naturally enough, Miss Morgan stated that her father committed suicide in a fit of insanity; but the coroner's jury, composed of respectable citizens—fathers themselves, had not found the evidence strong enough to sustain this conclusion.

They had no intention of prejudging the case, or of prejudicing the public mind in advance of the legal investigation; but an examination of the facts destroyed entirely the suicide hypothesis. Some startling facts, it was hinted, would be developed at the trial.

Miss Morgan was ignorant of all this. Several days had now been passed in her little prison room, and Stannard took good care to keep these papers from her; but he chafed under this comment, and set his teeth hard together in his impotent rage.

The comments of the Fort Valley paper upon the indictment were particularly exasperating; and Stannard threw the paper on the floor, vowing to "chastise that man Cherry, preacher or no preacher."

The article in question was one of those which condemn severely behind the safeguard of "they say," or "it is reported," the writer putting his own malice upon the public in this way, to avoid personal responsibility.

But a little reflection convinced Stannard that he could do nothing. Anything like the use of violence to redress her wrongs would ultimately get to Cecy's ears, and reflect, in a manner, on her.

"This is one of the glorious prerogatives of a free press," he muttered, kicking the paper away from him; "it is a great thing to be able to abuse an innocent girl without fear of the law—protected by the law, even from personal chastisement."

These days of waiting were very far from being as tedious to Miss Morgan as her friends had sup-

posed, for in the consciousness of Stannard's presence, and his attentions to her, she found a never-failing panacea for time and trouble. Every morning he sent her a bouquet of fresh flowers; every evening he called for an hour or two, bringing along something for her comfort, or to add to the appearance of her room.

Day by day, Cecy felt a great change going on in her heart, and often found herself wondering how it was that she came to love Alfred Guerry. Did she love him? No, she had to confess that she never loved him as she had loved before, although she came near doing so; and closely questioning her own heart, she saw how completely she had given herself up to a fancy.

"I was piqued at his coolness," she thought, referring to Stannard, "and I did not believe he cared for me. And then they all seemed to think so much of Alfred—all the girls were trying to catch him. I was carried away by success."

Hour after hour she sat by her window, blaming herself severely, and questioning her own heart.

"I thought him a malignant satirist who said that women love, not from the evidence of their own senses, but from the judgment of other women; yet how true it was even in my own case. I was mad. Parents are right when they say that the young do not know their own minds. We think that we do, and oppose restraint, bringing upon ourselves a lifetime of trouble. Oh, that I had listened to the good advice that was given me."

One evening Cecy sat musing thus, when, to her great surprise, Mrs. Bond came in. Despite the distance, she had driven down from Macon to spend a night with her suffering friend. It was a visit that brought inconceivable relief to Cecy.

For a moment she could not realize that it was really her friend; the next they were locked in each other's arms.

"I have come to spend the night with you, Cecy, my sister is with me. My dear Cecy, how much you must have suffered."

"Not so much as you think, dear, he is so good to me."

"He? who is he? not Alfred Guerry?"

"No!" replied Cecy, while a deep blush suffused her face, "I have seen Alfred but once since I came."

"Do you mean Colonel Stannard?"

Cecy did not answer, but bowed her head upon the bosom of her friend, a gesture which told the story of her heart.

"Dear, tell me one thing—did you have any words with Alfred?"

"Never; why do you ask?"

"Do you love him? Believe me, Cecy, I do not ask from idle curiosity; but for your own good. I have something to tell you about him—if I may."

For a short time Cecy did not speak, but presently made a full confession to her friend.

"I have told myself a thousand times," she said, "that I must have been mad; yet I might have loved him had he come to me in this trial. Hattie, he acted cowardly with me—what woman could love a man she knew to be that? Sometimes I scold myself for despising him."

"I never liked him, Cecy; do you not remember that I——"

"I remember it well; but I was wayward. Even when I thought that I loved Alfred best, I trembled before—before—him."

It did not need a name to show who this "him" was, for Mrs. Bond read the secret of the heart throbbing against her own.

"Cecy, darling, you do not know how happy you have made me. I was trembling over the news that I had to bring you. Shall I tell it to you?"

Cecy nestled closer to her friend, having then a suspicion of what was to come.

"Mr. Martin came to see me," Mrs. Bond began, "two days after he was here, we entered into a conspiracy together—plotting against you with all our might. Did Colonel Stannard tell you about Mr. Guerry in his room?"

"He has never told me anything except that Mr. Guerry was there."

"He came there with the paper you had given him. Mr. Martin always believed that Alfred was trying to get your money, and told him then that you were a poor girl. Peyton Crawford was present. I do not know all that happened there, but Guerry did not behave like a gentleman. He left in a rage, saying he was going to appeal to you.

"Colonel Stannard was much distressed at this, and offered him all the money that you needed; he was afraid to add another trouble to yours, and begged Alfred to return.

"Angry with them, but more particularly with himself, he left town at once for Macon. That very evening he called on Minnie Johnson, and——"

"And what, Hattie? Do not keep back anything from me."

"She came to me to ask, the next morning, if it was true that he was never engaged to you. Alfred had told her that there was no formal engagement."

"I am glad of that," said Cecy, clasping her friend still closer.

"So am I, for your sake, dear; but the worst is yet to come—he proposed to her, and she refused him."

"I am glad of that, too."

"Cecy, as sure as we live he is a bad man. Mr. Martin gave me some hints which seemed to show that Alfred was in deeper trouble. The day before I left, a detective was looking for him."

Cecy gave a little cry and raised her head.

"What for—what was it for?" she asked, quickly. "If it was about——"

"Nothing about this trouble, Cecy, Mr. Martin assured me of that; but he hoped that it might lead to some developments of the mystery which seems to shroud your father's death. But let me tell the rest. When I told Mr. Martin about Alfred's proposal to Miss Johnson, he left at once to find him. He found Alfred in the street, and there confessed that he was mistaken about your property—that there was no will, as he had supposed.

"What passed during that interview I cannot tell; but Alfred left town that evening on the Echaconnee road. I feared that he had already been here. I am sure you will see him soon."

"I shall not see him," said Cecy, firmly; "I shall deny myself to him if he comes. Oh, Hattie, why did I not listen to you!"

Laying her head in the lap of her friend, Cecy sobbed out her self-accusations, and showed that she was no longer under the influence which had swayed her heart.

It was a great consolation to Cecy to have her friend spend the night with her, and until far into the morning they lay in each other's arms, talking of the past and future trials.

True to the prediction of Mrs. Bond, Alfred was in Perry the following day. He had avoided Stannard at the hotel, and for some time hung about the jail to make sure that he was not there.

It was a great surprise to him when Mrs. Harris returned his card with Cecy's refusal to see him, and all persuasion failed to induce the honest little woman to take a note of entreaty to Miss Morgan.

"It's no use trying, sir, she will not see you."

"But, Mrs. Harris, just take this to her," handing a card upon which he had written; "just take this to her and see. If she refuses then I'll go away."

"You will have to go away without it, for she positively refused to see you. Besides, she has a lady with her."

"A lady? Who is it, Mrs. Harris?"

"A lady from Macon—Mrs. Bond, I believe," said the little woman, delivering her message according to instructions.

Alfred staggered as he heard the name, and repeated it in surprise. He turned to the door; out into the street he went feeling that his last hope of safety was gone. What had he to live for now? How could he escape the Nemesis that was pursuing him.

Glancing up the street as he climbed the fence for the purpose of striking into the woods where his horse had been left, he saw Stannard approaching

the jail. Stepping behind a tree he watched Standard as he entered the building, and waited to see if he, too, was refused admittance.

It took not long to solve this problem, and breathing curses upon the man who had befriended him, Alfred crept along the fence, and was soon lost in a thicket of pines.

Time wore on and the session of the court was near at hand. Except in name, Cecy's captivity was nothing to her, and she began to dread the time when the delicious sweetness of those days would be interrupted. Friends came often to see her. Mrs. Harris was always at her side, and Standard was ever mindful of her welfare.

Doctor Trippe was improving rapidly, and had already partially recovered his mind. Looking up into the face of his wife one morning, he astonished her by asking abruptly if Mr. Morgan had been buried.

"Yes, indeed! near three weeks ago;" she told him, and affectionately placing her hand over his mouth forbade him to speak.

"Tell me one thing, dear, and then don't speak again until I tell you. Who shot you?"

"Shot me?" he echoed, "when was I shot?"

"There, there! You are not shot," she said, quickly, as she observed his efforts to recall the past. "The doctor has forbidden you to speak, and I won't have it. You must not ask a question until I give you leave; and that will not be for a week."

The little woman stopped his mouth with a kiss as he began to remonstrate, and tried to impress upon him the necessity for rest. Trippe was not hard to persuade, for his frequent fits of wandering had convinced him that he must be quiet.

But his eyes brightened daily and his intellect grew stronger. He began to grow observant and thoughtful; while his eye followed the busy, loving woman about the room with a look that plainly invited confidence.

"I promised to obey you," she said to him one day, when he was inclined to rebel against her severity, "and so I will when you are up again. I

have you on your back now, an exceptional case not provided in the contract, and I am going to make the most of the little time I have. You may make me pay for it, though."

But the smiles on the sick man's face, as he drew her down to press a kiss upon her lips, told plainly that the retribution would not be very terrible.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DETECTIVE ON THE TRAIL.

Three days before the time appointed for the trial of Miss Morgan, Peyton Crawford came with Doctor Pierce to Echaconnee. Stannard had just arrived from Perry, having been sent for to meet Martin and the detective.

For more than a week Appling had been hard at work, and now had a clew which, it was hoped, would lead to some unexpected developments.

Crawford was not in the best of spirits.

"There is no doubt about it, doctor," he said, as they were walking from the station; "we must have Trippe's testimony. I do not see how it can be avoided."

"I can't promise you, Crawford, any excitement might throw him back, and his mind has wandered whenever he has mentioned this matter."

"You must make the attempt. I see no help for it."

"Could you not have the trial put off?"

"Yes, by keeping her in jail."

"Let us see how Trippe is to-day. If possible we may question him."

Stannard met them at the gate, and together they went into the sick man's room. Crawford had known Trippe for some years, and stepped to his side.

"My dear Trippe!" said he, taking the hand extended to him; "how are you? I'm sorry to see you in this way, old fellow; but Pierce says you are picking up fast."

"Thanks! yes; I believe I am doing very well—a great deal better than Pierce thinks, I'm sure; or he would let me talk a little."

"Time enough for that, Trippe; you'll be all right in a day or two."

"I'm all right now, mentally. It would do me an

immense amount of good to have a talk with you—it would hurry me out of this.”

“My dear fellow, never hurry; I give you Stannard’s rule, and a very good one, too. Take life easy, Trippe, in whatever form it comes to you.”

“Wait until you are in my fix, Peyton, before giving advice; wait until you have a doctor tyrannizing over you.”

“Now, Trippe,” said Pierce, laughing, “don’t put it on me. Did I say anything to you about it.”

“You conspired with my wife, though—all the same.”

“You are a doctor yourself, Trippe, and know what tyrants doctors are, as well as the necessity for their being so.”

“Yes, I’m aware of all that,” answered Trippe, with a smile; “but here I have been sitting up in bed off and on for some days; and Ham, who only sees me once a day, still forbids me to talk. The greatest worry of my life is that I can’t put one of you on the witness stand and question you for an hour.”

“Well, Trippe, we’ll see about that to-morrow,” interposed Pierce, laying his hand upon the invalid’s pulse. “If you keep on as you are to-day, we’ll hold a general court-martial on you, and sentence you to be shot, or to convalescence.”

“I’ll be shot if I shouldn’t like it, doctor.”

“That depends; don’t speculate on the finding of the court, sir. We may sentence you to be hanged,” still holding the wrist. Pierce took out his watch and counted for a moment.

“To be hanged in a hammock, out there on the porch,” he concluded, closing the watch.

“I’ll be hanged if I shouldn’t like that, too; but I say, Ham, couldn’t you manage to put your words a little closer together? You want to frighten me into submission.”

The three men looked at each other with smiles, each happy to see that Trippe’s intellect had returned. Pierce would not continue the badinage.

“There, Trippe, that will do for to-day. Save your strength—you are tired already.”

"Not a bit of it, doctor," he answered, briskly. "Don't try to prejudice the court against me."

Again Pierce laid his hand upon the sick man's wrist, smiling toward Crawford, as they recognized Trippe's power of continuing the simile.

"What does the pulse say, doctor?"

"It says that you are much better than I expected to find you; but it tells me also that you have talked enough for to-day. Be patient, Trippe, you'll soon be out."

The invalid obeyed, but listened eagerly to the conversation around him, hoping to hear something about Morgan's death; but this was a topic which they studiously avoided.

"He is improving rapidly," said the doctor, as the three men met on the porch. "If there is no change for the worse we may question him to-morrow."

"It is of no use to-day," repeated Crawford; "Martin is not here. Where is he, Stannard?"

"He promised to come with Appling, this morning. He'll be here to-morrow, certainly."

"I must catch the train—good-by," said Pierce, offering his hand; "you will see me in the morning."

Lighting their cigars, Stannard and Crawford walked down to the bridge, and leaning upon the rail above the scene of the doctor's accident, discussed the case in all its bearings. Stannard spoke of the man he had seen on that morning, and they started across the bridge to examine the spot.

"I am sure of it, Stannard, and everything points that way. If old—what's his name? was——"

"Hawks—Abner Hawks."

"If Hawks was there, depend upon it he is concerned in this murder. He has not been seen since, you tell me?"

"No; sometimes he was not seen in the settlement for months; but of late he had often been here."

"Where does he live?"

They were near the end of the dry-bridge when this question was asked, and before Stannard could answer it, their steps were arrested.

"Hist!" said some one in the bushes near them, and looking to the right, they were surprised to see

Appling, the detective, hidden behind a fallen cypress.

"Don't speak," he said, in a whisper; "don't make a noise. Come near me, please."

They pushed through the bushes and sat upon the log.

"I'm after old Hawks," he said, in an undertone; "and have a trace of him. Go back as you came, without looking around. I may not be able to meet you to-morrow, but will come to Perry at once. Go, quick—I expect my bird every minute."

"But what do you——"

"Please don't question me now, Mr. Crawford; I have nothing but suspicion. I'll let you hear from me soon."

It was now twilight and fast growing dark. The two men retraced their steps in silence, but turned as they reached the rise of the hedge, seeing the shadow of a man, opposite the spot where the detective was lying, as it disappeared in the bushes.

"Appling has him this time—no hound on the scent is keener than that fellow. I have never seen his equal."

"I hope he may be on the right track, Peyton; for, to tell the truth, I begin to fear she will have to remain there until the next term of court."

Talking of the topic that was uppermost in their minds, the friends soon arrived at Stannard's gate. Appling's clew furnished a new key to them, and until near midnight they sat upon the veranda, going over, again and again, the points that could be made in Miss Morgan's defense.

The morning train brought Pierce to Echaconnee, and again the three men stood at Trippe's bedside.

"Can you not see that I am better, Crawford? It was all owing to my little talk with you yesterday. I believe a man would cease to think rationally, if he could not express his thoughts in some way."

"Don't try to do too much, Trippe; you may be needed to——"

Pierce called Crawford to the window, interrupting his remark.

"It's a conspiracy, Trippe," he said, apologetically. "Depend upon it we are after you sharply."

"I called you to say," said Pierce, "that I do not think it will do any harm to question him now, provided it is done gently. It would be better to defer it a few days though if you could."

"It is very important, doctor, that we should find out what he knows about it. I do not say that Miss Morgan is in danger; but I do say that she should have all the help that we can give her."

"Try not to agitate him, Crawford; a reference to the murder might excite him, and he is still very weak."

Pierce spoke in a louder tone than he intended, perhaps, for the words reached Trippe's ears, and hearing a noise, they turned to see him sitting up in bed.

"Murder!" he cried. "What murder? Miss Morgan to be tried for murder? What do you mean?"

They sprang to his side, finding him trembling with excitement.

"Lie down, Trippe," said Pierce, quickly, "you must not agitate yourself—be quiet and we will tell you—there!"

He sank back upon the pillow and looked up eagerly into their faces.

"We did not dare tell you before," continued the doctor. "Indeed, it has been but a few days that I felt sure of your life even—and but few, four or five at the most, in which you could have understood us."

"Tell me quick, please—this suspense is very trying to me."

"In short, then, the coroner's jury found a verdict against Miss Morgan for killing her father, and she has been committed for trial."

"The idiots!" Trippe cried. "The stupid fools! Could they not see that Morgan killed himself?"

"Not exactly, Trippe. Stannard thought—we all thought, in fact, that Morgan was murdered."

"Why, Miss Morgan could have told you better than that."

"She was sick, Trippe—unconscious for several

days. She said, later, that her father committed suicide; but all the circumstances pointed to a murder. How could we prove it?"

"Where is she now?"

"At Perry. She is to be tried in a day or two."

"Oh, Heaven!" Trippe groaned outright. "How long has she been there?"

"About three weeks."

"And you've kept me in ignorance of all this when that innocent girl was in prison charged with this crime! Heaven knows, I would have risked my life a thousand times to have prevented it."

"I know you would—I'm sure you would, Trippe," said Stannard, grasping his hand.

"And you, Stannard! You of all others should have known me better. How often have I heard you say that life was not worth purchasing at the expense of an act of cowardice?"

"Come! come! Trippe! be charitable," said Crawford, coming to the bedside. "We did what we considered for the best, and there is no use in quarreling about it now—let us think what is to be done. You are so positive that Morgan killed himself—how can you prove it?"

"By my art," said Trippe, firmly. "Morgan committed suicide in a fit of delirium, during which he tried to frighten his daughter into a promise."

"What was the promise? Is it important?" Crawford asked.

"I only know by what he had previously said to me, when raving about his daughter. You know how he hated the Guerrys? He wanted Miss Morgan to give up Alf Guerry and marry—marry another," he concluded, after a short pause.

"Strange she should not have told me that!" Stannard remarked.

"Perhaps it is," said Trippe, thoughtfully; "will you get me a glass of fresh water?"

Stannard left the room, and as the door closed behind him, Trippe continued:

"The truth is, old Morgan wanted her to marry Stannard—he had set his heart on it. It was an old dream—as old as Miss Morgan herself. He wanted

to have these two places united by—hush! he is coming.”

“Stannard returned with the water.

“Ah! ha! Yes, I see,” said Crawford, nodding.

“As I was saying,” continued Trippe, sipping a little water from the glass, “as I was saying a moment ago, I knew the whole story, heard it from Morgan himself; and even then feared it would work upon his mind until he became utterly insane. I ought to have sent him to Milledgeville: but Miss Morgan opposed it so strongly that I had to wait for some overt act, as they say, to warrant my taking the responsibility. I feared that he would do her some harm, and never got a call that I did not ride fast over.”

“Poor girl! she did her best,” said Stannard; “how patient she was with him.”

“A perfect angel—’pon my word, I wondered at her,” Trippe replied, speaking earnestly.

“But how can you prove this? Suppose that we are sure of suicide, how can we convince a jury? How can you prove it, Trippe?”

“By my art, Crawford, as I said a moment ago. Let me think a moment. Stannard, have you seen a note-book of mine about here?”

“I saw you writing in one by that dreadful bedside—a black leather-covered memorandum-book. I remember distinctly watching you in a dreamy state of semi-unconsciousness as you wrote. I’ve not seen the book since. I will ask Mrs. Trippe about it.”

During his illness Trippe’s wife had been constantly by his side, and the fond woman was now overjoyed at the prospect of his recovery. If she left him to run home for a brief visit to the children, she was quickly back again, and at night slept upon a couch wheeled close by his bedside.

At this time she was happy over a few words from Pierce, telling her that the doctor could be moved home in a few days. Through all his illness she had been a faithful nurse, and, though loving him with all her tender nature, was firm in carrying out the doctor’s orders.

"If I do not," she would tell herself, "and any harm should come to him, I could never sleep in peace again."

And so, strong in her affection for him, the little woman had ruled him sternly in all things pertaining to his sickness. When in health, she had never entertained a thought of opposing him, for her whole life was wrapped up in him and the children, and she knew no pleasures in which they had not a part.

Just now she was particularly happy, and sat humming a ballad over her sewing as Stannard entered to inquire for the book.

"I've never seen it," she replied to his query. "I don't think I know what you mean."

"The doctor says it is in the side-pocket of the coat he had on when he fell."

"Then it must be there still, Colonel Stannard."

"Oh, jewel of wives!" he said, gayly, "do you mean to say that you have gone three weeks without searching your husband's pockets? I can hardly credit it."

"I do mean to say it—but do not think that I have no curiosity. I'm not above that womanly weakness—and I am just dying now to find out what you men are doing in there."

"I never tell tales out of school, madam," he said, laughing; "besides, I make it a rule never to encourage the failings of womankind."

"And I never search for old coats; besides, do you not see that I am busy?"

"Yes, busy tangling your thread, as you have been your brains, about our doings."

"Have I not confessed it? There! you have made me prick my fingers. Well, then, you will find the aforesaid coat in the armoire close by my husband's bed."

Bowing to her with a smile and a wave of his hand, Stannard went back to the doctor's room. Before he could search for the book a servant came in with a note. Stannard took it from the boy's hand and hastily broke the seal. A slip of paper fell upon the floor.

"It is from Martin," Stannard said, glancing at the signature, "he is in Macon."

He ran his eyes quickly over the words, and presently sat down by the window. Crawford picked up the slip that had fallen.

"My Heavens! Peyton," Stannard exclaimed, presently, "just look at this."

Crawford took the letter.

"Read it aloud, Peyton. What could that young man have been thinking of? How could he escape detection?"

"Dear Colonel," Crawford read, "I have but a moment to write to you. Appling has found old Hawks, and will have him arrested to-day."

"Is the inclosed order genuine? The ink has faded a little, showing that the last cipher was written with a different quality. I am watching G—— so that he will not be able to escape. Send word by the up train."

"That will settle the matter beyond question," said Crawford; "what could he have done with that money?"

"I sent him an order for two hundred only—let me see the ink."

"This is not the original, Martin is too sharp to let that go from his hands."

"If what Trippe says is true, why arrest him? Let him have the money—I'll not prosecute this."

"Now, Stannard, I protest against that. I do not believe Trippe understands the case—he thinks he does, but it must be cleared up."

Stannard was forced to yield, and sending word to Martin that the order was a forgery, authorized the arrest of Alfred Guerry.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARREST OF ALFRED GUERRY AND OLD HAWKS.

Sending off his letter in reply to Martin's note, Stannard returned to find Pierce and Crawford in the garden.

"We came out to let Trippe rest for a time," explained the doctor; "and wanted to discuss the matter by ourselves. Whether Morgan killed himself or was killed, you must admit, Stannard, that this young fellow should not be permitted to marry that noble girl."

"What a pity!" said Stannard, sadly. "If she really loves him she will never recover from this blow. You don't know her."

Entirely unselfish, Stannard did not think of himself, but, at any sacrifice to himself, wished to make Cecy happy. No longer could he doubt that Alfred was a criminal, and he prayed that Cecy might not suffer from this additional blow. Little did he know the change in her heart; little suspect that she was now almost hating herself for being led away by her fancy for Alfred Guerry.

For some moments there was silence between the men in the garden, each being busy with his own thoughts. It was first broken by Pierce.

"Let us go in now. Trippe will be anxious, and we had better get his story at once."

They went into the room again, and Stannard, finding the note-book, placed it in Trippe's hand. He turned over the leaves for a moment, and, smoothing it back with his hand, took a sip of water.

"I have here," Trippe began, "a full and accurate account of each wound on Morgan's body—its depth, width, inclination and character. I intended to make a diagram of them, and should have explained them to the coroner had I been able to do

so. Doctor, you can follow me: One wound in the right breast, two inches from——”

“Never mind the particulars, Trippe—save your strength. It will not matter now. Give us your summary merely.”

“It is simply this—mark now, I know nothing of Miss Morgan’s statement of the case—see how mine compares with hers. There were ten wounds—all in the right breast—all to the right of the heart. The most of them are mere pricks, penetrating but slightly; two only entered the lung.

“From their inclination they could only have been produced—when a man was able to offer the slightest resistance or even to move—by a knife in the left hand; and that by the hand of Morgan himself.

“A second person would have given the wounds a downward slant. Had murder been intended, the heart would have been pierced; and the fact of so many of these wounds being slight cuts, merely, is another proof that they were not inflicted by a murderous hand.

“I believe that Morgan tried to frighten his daughter at first—perhaps fancied he had killed her. Finally, growing wild and delirious, he tried to kill himself. At the sight of blood he became worse and gave the remaining wounds—the two deeper ones, probably, being the last.

“He died from loss of blood. A stronger man might have survived any or all of those wounds—perhaps he might have pulled through had I been there in time. He was dying when I entered the room.

“I have here Morgan’s last words, which Stannard can verify. These refer solely to her opposition to him, and more than once were uttered in my presence—referring to her refusal to give up Guerry and marry—marry another. I think that he was raving mad a week before he died, and I now regret that I had not taken the responsibility of sending him to the asylum, regardless of Miss Morgan’s opposition.

“I should have ordered him into a strait-jacket

the last time that I saw him. Do I differ from Miss Morgan in any of the particulars?"

"No; but you tell us more than she did," Stannard answered. "I believe that she fainted before he struck the first blow. She has an idea that she saw a man at the window, and heard the crash of the glass as she cried for help."

"That must have been fancy, I think," answered Trippe; "but of that I know nothing. I do know, however, that Morgan died by suicide."

"There was blood over the floor, don't you remember that, Trippe?"

"Perfectly. I will tell you the whole secret in my opinion. When Miss Morgan fainted, Morgan fancied he had killed her, and trying to kill himself, walked about the room. I think he fell against the window—I thought so when I saw it first. But he must have been near the bed when she revived, and——"

"She says so," said Stannard.

"That will do, Trippe; that will do. I must put all this into an affidavit, and—who is your nearest magistrate?"

"We have one near by; I'll send for him."

Stannard went out for the purpose, while Crawford arranged his writing materials near the bed.

"Affidavit?" said Trippe. "What is the use of that—I am going to Perry myself."

"Indeed you are not—the idea is preposterous!" exclaimed Pierce. "You would never get half way there."

"This will do very well," Crawford added; "at least, until we get you up."

"Yes, and let that poor girl die in jail."

"Trust me for that, Trippe. I can manage to get bail on this."

"I know you will if you can, Crawford;" and finding their opposition so strong he yielded to them.

"In case of accident, Trippe, I must have your statement in proper order. Rest awhile now, and I'll take it later."

Night came, and still they had no news from

Martin; but Crawford decided to go at once to Perry in order to be on hand to stay proceedings if necessary. Stannard was anxious to get back to Cecy. Pierce was starting for the evening train.

"We shall not see you in the morning, Ham, but take good care of Trippe."

"Certainly I will, Stannard. Let me know how things come on."

Early the next morning Stannard and Crawford drove off for Perry. It was late in the evening when they arrived; but they lost no time in going to the jail to see Miss Morgan.

The two men paused in amazement as they entered the little room and saw the change that had been wrought. The furniture was entirely new; a neat French bedstead with tent bar stood in the corner; fine lace curtains, falling in graceful folds from gilded cornices, hid the grated window-frame; engravings were hanging on the walls, and the whole room seemed filled with the delicate perfume of violets and roses, which stood in pretty vases on a rosewood bureau.

With a bright smile Cecy came forward to meet them, throwing aside the book she was reading as she rose. She could but observe their surprise, as she extended her hand to Stannard.

"To you I owe it all," she said, seeing him glance around the room. "How can I ever thank you for your kindness."

"It was not the things, Cecy, that I was admiring, but the effect you have produced with them. It is wonderful."

"It is all due to my good fairy. Need I tell you that I have been very happy, even here. Do I show signs of care?"

"Indeed, Cecy, I am glad to see you looking so well."

They had expected to find her pale, wan, and sad; but here she stood, brighter, fresher, and more cheerful than she had been for many a day.

"Do you not think, Mr. Crawford, that sorrow agrees with me? I know that I ought to be crushed under my load of sorrow and trouble; but I have in

my heart; a——” she hesitated and stammered out; “but I am not even unhappy.”

Was she about to say that she had something in her heart that proved an antidote to sorrow? It was what she felt, although she dare not say it before him. She knew now that he loved her. Not a trace of regret for Alfred Guerry could she find in her heart, and she now regarded that weak, vacillating young man with pity, as she wondered at her own heart.

Stannard sighed deeply as he found his heart throbbing painfully at the very sight of this sweet girl. After a few simple compliments, the lawyer began on the business which had brought them there.

“Our time is short, Miss Morgan—permit me to come at once to business. Not to annoy you by needless delay, I must say that we have the testimony of Doctor Trippe——”

“Oh, is he better?” she broke in gladly; “I am so glad to hear it. How happy Mrs. Trippe must be.”

“Unselfish girl!” Stannard thought, “she never thinks of herself when another is in trouble.”

“Yes, my dear Miss Morgan,” Crawford replied, “I am happy to tell you that he is out of danger. He has told us all, and has confirmed your statement in every particular. He knew of the promise which your father tried to extract from you; and by his skill and thoughtfulness he has supplied us with, I hope, sufficient evidence of your father’s suicide.”

“Oh, Mr. Crawford! I felt sure it was so. Did he say that my father killed himself?”

“He did—but for his accident you would not have been subjected to this annoyance. He told us all.”

“Did the doctor tell you all about—about——”

She hesitated and cast a quick glance toward Stannard, as her face crimsoned with confusion. She could not speak. Crawford understood her confusion.

“Confound these birds—I cannot hear myself think. I wonder how you can bear this noise, Miss

Morgan. Stannard, I wish you would stop them for a moment, while I——”

Taking advantage of the moment, Crawford whispered:

“I know all; he does not. He was out when the doctor told me.”

She looked inexpressibly grateful to him, and appreciated his delicacy in relieving her embarrassment, which was near betraying her.

“There, Stannard, that will do. I only hope you have frightened them out of their voices for a time.”

Stannard came back to his seat.

“I must tell you, Miss Morgan, that you will have to appear in court to-morrow,” continued Crawford, “and may be subjected to some annoyance. Remember, however, that you have warm friends in us—ready to protect you, anxious to do you good service.”

“I know it, Mr. Crawford; I cannot express my gratitude to you and to—to Colonel Stannard.”

“Do not try, please, Miss Moragn; it is a pleasure to serve you.”

Stannard could not speak, but looking at her face, he saw her eyes wet with tears, and felt that he could gladly die to serve her. The loving fondness of her glance did not escape Crawford’s eyes.

“As I was saying, you may be annoyed to-morrow, but I hope you may not be long detained. Stannard’s evidence will go against you, seemingly, at first; but it will be strongly in your favor when all the facts are brought to light—and I hope you may be discharged immediately. Keep a good heart, whatever happens, my dear young lady, and rely on us for doing all that can be done.”

“I do not fear, Mr. Crawford; I have never had a fear for the result. The best armor that one can wear is the consciousness of innocence. I never really appreciated this until I was so tried.”

“I can only partially agree with you, Miss Morgan. To you, I admit, this is perfectly true——”

“But is it not always true, sir?”

“Perhaps not. To a man who knows the uncer-

tainties of the law, it is not always so, I fear. I have seen innocent men writhe and turn pale under the torture of the law, and suffer as much—quite as much—as if they had been guilty.”

“Then it must be the fault of the law, Mr. Crawford.”

“Or the fault of the men in my profession, more properly speaking. I know a lawyer now, who bullied the witnesses in a murder case until he had a man hanged; two years afterward, his own abilities in the same line proved the man innocent.”

“How terrible! I should dislike that man exceedingly.”

“And yet he is a noted man at the Georgia bar—a most excellent father and neighbor.”

“I could not like him.”

“Then I’ll not tell you his name, Miss Morgan. Well, this is not cheerful talk for you; but you have nothing to fear.”

“I do not—I have not had the slightest fear.”

“Come, colonel, Martin may be down to-night, and we must be ready to meet him.”

They rose to go, but she raised her hand to bid them be again seated.

“Pray do not go immediately—that is, if you can spare me a moment. I want to ask about Doctor Trippe?”

“He is doing famously—indeed, we had hard work to keep him from starting for Perry the moment he heard you were here.”

“He is so kind—how happy I am to hear that he is better. But I wanted to inquire about his accident. How did it happen?”

“That we do not know. There is a mystery about it, but Trippe refuses to tell how it happened.”

“But was not his horse shot?”

“Yes; Trippe says that it was an accident; but I have my own opinion upon the matter.”

“I can scarcely conceive that he should be shot twice by accident, and very near the same place,” said Stannard. “It was hardly a month ago that he came to my house with a hole through his coat.”

“I do not believe it was an accident,” Crawford

responded; "I feel sure it was not. But Trippe was so anxious to change the subject that I could not pursue it."

"Oh, Mr. Crawford! Do you think that somebody tried to murder him?"

"I do not know that; but I am sure, despite the doctor's reticence, that it was no accidental shot that came so near ending his life."

"How dreadful! In all my life there have been no such horrors in our quiet settlement before. It was quite a little Eden, was it not, Will—Colonel Stannard?"

"It was, indeed; I hope——"

"That we may soon find the serpent which has disturbed this little Eden," interrupted Crawford, catching up Stannard's words. "So do I. Unless I am greatly mistaken, we have him in custody now."

For the first time during this interview, Cecy thought of Alfred Guerry, and she now remembered what Mrs. Bond had said of him.

"Who has been arrested, Mr. Crawford?"

A look from Stannard prevented a reply that was already on the lawyer's lips.

"Colonel Stannard, who is it? I see you do not wish to tell me, and I know by that whom you mean—it is Mr. Guerry."

Stannard was deeply grieved, fearing that she would have another sorrow pressed upon her heart. She knew it now, and he could only make it as light for her as possible.

"It is true, Cecy, but it will not prove serious. I shall not appear against him."

"You shall not appear against him! You are talking in enigmas to me. Tell me, Mr. Crawford—for what has he been arrested?"

Crawford read her heart, and knew its secret well; therefore he did not hesitate to tell her. Stannard was trembling at the result he feared.

"What weak creatures we men are," thought Crawford, at that moment; "here is this man who fought like a tiger at Molino del Rey—one who never said 'go,' but always 'come,' trembling like an aspen before this weak girl."

The thought did not occupy his mind a second, and he answered her question promptly.

"Miss Morgan, he has been arrested for forgery."

"For what?" she cried, standing like a statue before them. "What is it that he has done?"

"He obtained two thousand dollars by forging an order on Colonel Stannard's merchants."

"Cecy, do not give it a thought, he shall not be injured by it. I will not—I promise you, under no consideration will I appear against him on this charge. The money was mine. I would give him ten times the sum rather than do him harm."

Again Crawford saw the loving light in her eyes, as she gazed fondly upon Stannard's sad but earnest face, and thanked fortune that she had been turned entirely from her former imprudent fancy. Strange that Stannard could not see it also.

With tears in her eyes, Cecy rushed forward and grasped his hand in both her own.

"Thanks! Ten thousand thanks, my noble, generous friend. Do not ruin his life for that. Let me share the loss with you, William, and let him go."

"Cecy, I shall not trouble him about it. The loss is nothing. I will forbid any proceedings against him."

"Is it known? Will it be made public? Oh, Mr. Crawford, do not think me unmaidenly—I have a deeper interest in him than you may suppose. Though he deserted me, I would not have any harm come to him."

"Deserted you?" said Stannard, almost breathless.

"Yes," she responded, quickly; "I must wear the willow; but can we not save him from public gossip?"

"We cannot, Miss Morgan," said Crawford; "it is impossible now."

"Then, William, my good friend, I want to borrow some money from you—will you aid me?"

Stannard started as he heard this, and looked into Crawford's eyes. The look did not escape Cecy.

"You do not understand me," she said, with a deep blush; "you think——"

"You do not understand us, I fear, Miss Morgan. Did you refuse to take money for your expenses from Colonel Stannard?"

"Never. Did he—did Mr. Guerri say that I did?"

"Never mind that, Peyton; it is nothing," Stannard interposed. "Cecy, can you doubt? Tell me, if you may do so, what you wish; perhaps I may aid you."

"I wish to have Mr. Martin give Mr. Guerri money enough to take him away. This will be his ruin if he stays."

"Trust it to me, Cecy; I will see that it is done at once. Believe me, Cecy, I will do all that I can for him."

"I believe you; I do—I do—I do," she sobbed and cried, hysterically, rising and stretching her hand toward him; but choking over the words that she could not utter, fell back into her chair.

The excitement of the past few moments, her great love, the nobleness of his nature, had strained her nerves to the utmost, and she sank back faint and exhausted.

Mrs. Harris was quickly by her side, and in a few moments she began to revive.

"I am better, thank you," she said to them. "Good-night, now; I will be ready for you in the morning."

In silence they left the room, and, stroking his mustache with a puzzled air, Stannard went down the stairs, followed by his friend. They paused in the room below, arrested by a bustle in the hall; and a moment later saw two men, in charge of the constable, entering the room.

It was Alfred Guerri and old Hawks. Slouching his hat down over his eyes, Alfred turned away from Stannard, who quickly stepped aside from motives of delicacy. With feeble steps old Hawks tottered into the room, his emaciated, cadaverous face showing the effect of the suffering he had endured during the past month; while a deep, hollow cough, told all around him that his term of life had almost ended.

The fatigue of the journey down, debilitated as

he was from loss of blood, want of food, and proper nursing, had been too much for the old man, and he sank upon the floor thoroughly exhausted.

"My God!" cried Stannard, springing toward him, "he is dying. Send for a doctor, Harris; I will see all expenses paid—give them the best you have."

Taking a card from his pocket, Stannard wrote a few words upon it, and pushed it into Alfred's hand.

"Colonel Stannard," said the young man, hoarsely, "I have no right to ask anything from you, but I wish you would do me one favor."

"Anything that I can do, Alfred, I will do for you."

"Do not let her know that I am here."

It was the last thing that Stannard desired, and had not the request been made he would have enjoined secrecy upon the jailer and his wife.

"I will attend to it, Alfred; make your mind easy. If you wish anything I hope you will not hesitate to call on me for it."

Guerry looked curiously into Stannard's face, as if to detect some lurking sarcasm there, but its perfect good faith and honesty were apparent. Yet this generosity did not soften his heart, and he felt a deeper hatred for the man who had never refused him a favor, and who was even then planning in his own mind how best to remove this charge of criminality.

After speaking aside with Raborn and the jailer, Stannard bade all good-night and followed Crawford from the room.

At the first moment, Alfred read the card in his hand.

"There will be no charge against you," Stannard had written; "say that you drew the money by my authority."

Crushing the card in his hand with a muttered curse, Alfred entered his cell, and heard the door close behind him.

CHAPTER XIX.

ALFRED GUERRY WHISPERS IN THE EAR OF DR. TRIPPE.

In relating a story which so many persons now living will remember, I have endeavored to confine myself to the leading facts—to give the main features only of the drama—leaving the by-play to be filled in by the imagination of the reader.

An expert story-teller (which I do not profess to be), could easily carry the story of the well-known Echaconnee tragedy through one or two large volumes; but I have no desire to do more than relate the simple facts, presenting, here and there, an epitome of the conversations which were held by the leading characters, in order to give the reader a fair understanding of their feelings and motives.

I pass over entirely the great excitement which the tragedy caused in the quiet Echaconnee settlement; the spiteful remarks of certain ladies upon Miss Morgan's arrest—ladies who "never did think her so much better than other people"—I pass the county talk and gossip about it for many a day, with many other things that would bear relating, and I shall touch lightly upon the trial at Perry.

But it made a great stir at the time, and drew out hundreds from the surrounding country who had never before seen the inside of the court-house.

All of these things may still be learned from any old gossip in Crawford or Houston counties; to relate them here would be to spin out my story to an impracticable length.

For four weeks the matter had been in every mouth, and on the morning of the trial the streets of Perry were filled with carriages, carts, and country wagons, bringing in people of both sexes and all conditions in life.

Before speaking of the trial it is necessary, in order to present a connected story to the reader, to

look back a little at the career of Alfred Guerry.

The night was far advanced when, driven from old Hawks' hut, he went out to seek food and stimulants for the wounded man. For some time he stood upon the brow of the hill gazing at the light which shown from Cecy Morgan's sick chamber, and once more a bitter feeling took possession of his heart. Yet how could he escape from the clutches of old Hawks?

"I would murder you if I could," he said, aloud, shaking his clenched hand toward the hut below. "Why did I ever place myself in your power?"

He could not answer the question, but thought bitterly of the contract in writing which he had made with that old man, thus giving him still greater power if he chose to use it.

"And what have I to hope from him," Alfred thought. "He would betray me for money as willingly as he murdered Morgan. I thought that shot had killed him, when I heard his cry in the shrubbery—would to Heaven it had! Now I must be his slave until he is well enough to go away."

"I wonder if he would die there," he thought again, as a dark purpose came into his mind. "I wonder if he could give an alarm if I left him there?"

It was a risk that he dare not run. Fully implicated with old Hawks in the murder, he was bound to carry the thing through to the end; and his best plan was to get the old man up as soon as possible, and send him away with the money drawn from Stannard.

It was late in the morning when Alfred returned to the bridge; and he disappeared in the bushes just in time to avoid Stannard, who was riding over to pay his morning visit at the castle.

With a heart full of curses, he peered through the bushes at the thoughtful, placid face of the rider, remaining there until the sound of the horse's hoofs was lost in the distance.

Even by daylight the entrance to the hut was not easily found; but, guided by the voice within, he once more passed over the logs, and pushing aside

some loose bushes carelessly thrown over the crevice, lowered himself to the door.

"Have you brought that whisky?" shouted old Hawks, as soon as Alfred appeared. "Give it here—and be quick about it."

"Here it is, Hawks—and trouble enough I had to get it."

"What do I care for that. Air you gwine to let a friend die for the sake of a-saving trouble."

"No, Hawks, of course not. Why you're looking better."

"Astonishes ye, don't it? You see, I hain't no notion er dying yit awhile."

The old man took a long pull at the bottle, and then uncovered the wound in his side. The very sight of it made Alfred sick and faint.

"If you'd seen that old fellar up yonder, you'd laugh at a thing like this 'ere. He was as bloody as a butcher."

With a shudder Alfred turned his eyes away from the sickening sight.

"Don't, Hawks! don't speak of it—what's the use. Come now, Hawks, when will you go away?"

"Soon's I git ready, boss; and that won't be long arter I git able. Ye see my work is done; and I hain't no notion staying here to be hanged about your'n."

"Hawks, what was the matter with you and Trippe?"

"Is he dead?" asked the old man, eagerly.

"They say that he is dying!"

"D'ye 'spose you could see him?"

"Perhaps I might—why, Hawks?"

With compressed lips the old man lay for a few moments without speaking; but presently turned to Guerry.

"Young man! you'd like to git rid of me, wouldn't ye now—say?"

"Of course, Hawks, I want you to go away. Do you suppose I want to see you caught?"

"Not very likely—might go hard with some other folks! eh? Can't trust the old man, eh?"

He looked up with a leer and winked his eye at

Alfred; but the malicious, venomous look soon returned to his face.

"See here, boss—ef you'll go thar, and say one word in his ear, I'll leave you forever."

"What is it?—what is the word?"

"If you'll whisper it tu him, and come back tu let me know, you'll never hear of old Hawks agin—I'll make yer fortin' in the bargain. Say that word and I'll give ye suthin, that young fellar over thar, would give a fortin' to git."

"Who, Hawks, Stannard? Will you give me his secret?"

"I'll give ye anything——"

"What is the word, Hawks? I'll do my best."

"Mary!" almost shrieked the old man, rising to a sitting posture, and raising his long gaunt arms. "You say that in his ear, and I'll ask no more of you. Just come here to see the old man," he continued sinking back upon the bed, "who's made yer fortin', 'till he gits able tu travel, and you'll never see a blaze on him in these parts agin."

The old man turned his face to the wall, and paid no attention to Alfred's questions; but at length he rose, and tears stood in his eyes.

"Who was she, boy? All in the world that old Hawks had to live for. When you've a darter of your own, then may be ye'll know what she was to me. Leave here now—go do what I told ye. Go marry that gal, and take yer fortin'—I'd had no hand in it but to git this money."

He slapped the pillow beneath which he had placed the twenty-five hundred dollars that Alfred had paid him, and continued:

"I needed that, ye see, and have helped you tu git it—that's all. You jist come here between whiles till this cussed thing is well; and you'll never hear more of me."

Again he turned away and Alfred could get no further response from him. For a few moments he gazed at the old man lying there before him, wondering at his strange life and singular history, then left the hut in silence.

Every day or two he visited the old man, who

seemed to be failing daily, although his wound was healing. A deep-seated cough had set in, and the hollow eyes and sunken chest were not the only signs that old Hawks was rapidly nearing his last day on earth.

Not yet had Alfred been able to see Doctor Trippe, although he had skulked about the house night after night for an opportunity to speak that one word in his ear. He dared not enter the house boldly; yet he was ready to dare much to get possession of Stannard's secret, which was to be the price of his work. Not a moment did he think of the sick man within; nor did he care what the result might be so that the work was accomplished.

Spending the greater part of his time in the Echaconnee woods, he had visited Macon but once, and with the result already related. That he had been cheated with regard to Cecy Morgan's property he now believed, and his anger turned upon Stannard, the only man of the three who was an unwilling party to the deception—if it could be called one under the peculiar circumstances of the case.

Burning for revenge—for what he could not tell—Alfred had again sought Cecy to be denied her presence. From his hiding-place he saw Stannard enter the jail, and from that moment the ground seemed sinking from beneath his feet.

"What have I gained," he thought, while standing beside his horse in the woods; "what have I gained at last? Cecy is lost to me—I cannot replace his money—defection and—"

He trembled at the thought, and for the first time the consequences of detection came home to his mind.

Sullen and moody he rode back to Echaconnee, knowing that he, too, must follow old Hawks, and both together leave the country.

It was near midnight when he reached the Echaconnee bridge, and riding across it, dismounted in a clump of pines, intending to pay old Hawks a visit, and tell him that the worst had come.

Scarcely had he again stepped into the road before a man, well-dressed and evidently a stranger

in those parts, walked by him on the opposite side of the way. He sprang into the pines, and a deathly sickness came over him.

"That man!" he said to himself—"I have seen him before. They are on the track at last."

Hastily mounting, he rode rapidly up the road, nor did he stop until some miles away.

"I'm on the right track, at last," said Appling to himself, as he looked over the brow of the hill and saw Alfred galloping along the sandy road.

"I knew it was somewhere here," the detective thought, "and I shall soon have my birds."

Selecting a place for a lookout, Appling walked back to Stannard's house, well satisfied with his night's work.

It was near daylight when Alfred Guerry reached his father's house, and putting his jaded horse in the stable, he sat down on the porch to wait until some one was stirring within.

At length he heard a sound, and ventured to rap at the door. His father came to it. The old man started back in alarm as he saw the pale, haggard face, and disordered dress of his son.

"Why, Alfred!" he exclaimed, "is it you? My son, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing is the matter with me."

"But why—Alfred, you look as if you had been out all night."

"And so I have, father, and you'd look so too, if you had ridden from Perry, as I have. Let me go to my room before they all get up."

"Have you seen Miss Morgan?"

"I left her last night," he answered, petulantly. "Let me go now, and I'll answer questions when I get up."

"Heaven grant, my son, that you may have done nothing wrong," the white-haired old man said to himself, as his wayward son went up the stairs.

It was late in the day when Alfred came down to meet his family, and little satisfaction could they get in questioning him about Cecy. He was silent and moody. As he again mounted his horse to go back to Perry, as they supposed, the little family

watched him sadly, each feeling what none would express, a sense of impending evil. Standing upon his porch, gazing after his only son, the aged minister prayed fervently that Heaven might bless him and direct his steps aright.

Leaving his horse in the woods, Alfred gained the hill by a circuitous route, and, creeping along the fences until near the hut, descended to it, noiselessly and in terror.

Like a guilty thing, pursued by a thousand fears, he crept over the logs, starting at each twig that broke beneath his feet; nor did he breathe freely until the door had closed behind him.

The old man struck a light.

"It's all up, Hawks; they are after us."

"How do ye know?" Hawks asked, quickly fixing his eyes upon Alfred's ashen face. "Answer me—how do ye know? Have you been——"

Reaching behind him, Hawks laid his hand upon his rifle, ere he continued:

"Have you bin blowing? How——"

"I haven't betrayed you, if that's what you mean. You know I dare not. Let me tell you."

Sitting upon the edge of his pallet, Hawks listened to the story in silence.

"Let us get away, Hawks," Alfred said at length; "I am sure we cannot stay here without being found out."

"And what have you done—suppose we air found out."

"What's the use of asking that, Hawks, when you have that paper against me? Wouldn't it implicate me in the murder, too?"

"Suppose I've burnt it—what then?"

"Hawks! how do you suppose I got that money?"

"Oh! ho! the old game was it? How'd you do it, now?"

Without disguise Alfred told him the story, and old Hawks listened in silence. Alfred had to confess that his last hope was gone, and once more begged the old man to go away while they could.

"How's the doctor?" asked Hawks, abruptly changing the conversation.

"They say he can't live. I heard at home that he wouldn't live but a few days more."

The statement was false, but Alfred understood the motive which prompted the question.

"Then I'll go when you've done what I told ye."

"But, Hawks, it ain't safe—indeed, it is not."

"I'll risk it, anyhow. I don't stir a step from here 'till you've done it, so jist stir your stumps. I want tu sleep, tu, so jist leave me, will ye?"

"Couldn't I stay here for to-night, Hawks? I have no place near that I know of. I can sleep here."

"Couldn't think of it, boss," said the old man, with a leer, laying one finger beside his nose. "My boy, that cat won't jump."

"Hawks, you don't think I would try to harm you?"

"One or tother on us might git murderous in our sleep, d'ye see? I don't want my rest spilt. Don't want to hurry ye, though."

Alfred could say no more, but left the hut, and crept carefully up the hill. Crouching along the fence he came to the coppice in which he had left his horse; but before reaching the spot his heart leaped into his mouth as he saw the shadow of a man disappearing in the pines.

Go where he could now, that terrible shadow was ever hovering near him. Thenceforth he had but one object. In one way only could he hope to get old Hawks out of the country, and his mind was busy with plans for accomplishing this purpose.

Hiding away by day—stopping at various small houses about the country to get food for himself and horse—every night found him near Stannard's house, watching for an opportunity to get alone into the sick man's room.

At length came the evening of Crawford's visit. Not suspecting Stannard's presence, Alfred had gone earlier than usual, and was hidden in the bushes beyond the garden fences, when the two men came out with Doctor Pierce.

Peering through the trees, he saw them on the veranda, shaking hands with the doctor, and a moment later watched Stannard and his friend as

they lighted their cigars and strolled down the road.

The sun had already set, and the long evening twilight was beginning. From his covert, Alfred followed them with his eyes until beyond the grounds, and glancing into the sick-room saw no one there.

Parting the bushes, he sprang over the garden fence and entered the hall. There was no one in sight. Passing into the room without being observed, he stepped toward the bed upon which Doctor Trippe was lying.

Fatigued by conversation with his friends, Trippe had fallen asleep, and Alfred crept noiselessly to the bedside. For a second or two he stood above the slumbering man, and, gazing upon his placid face, wondered what could be the secret which had the power to make that old man live as he did—to risk even life itself, for the sake of revenge? What and who was the Mary who had caused this feud between men of such widely different spheres?

Time was too precious to be wasted in profitless speculation, and bending over the quiet face, Alfred whispered the name in his ear. Trippe slowly opened his eyes, and Alfred sank down beside the bed.

Every moment he dreaded the arrival of some one, but until the lamps were lighted, he hoped to escape unrecognized.

"Hawks!" said Trippe, in a low tone.

No answer came, and again he spoke.

"Hawks! I know you are near me. This is your last chance; will you listen to me? I have borne long with you; but for the sake of my wife and children I shall do so no longer. Do you hear me?"

"Yes; speak," whispered Alfred, "unless some one comes."

"Keep quiet and I will send them out. It was a great risk for you to come here, but I am glad you came."

A step was heard near the door, and Mrs. Trippe, with a lamp in her hand, and humming an air, came to the door.

"Be quiet," said Trippe, and Alfred crouched low in the corner.

"My dear, please leave me alone for a few moments—I want to think here in the twilight," said the doctor to his wife.

"Shall I come in and sit with you?"

"After a little. Give me a half-hour with my own thoughts. I'll call you presently."

They were alone again, and once more Trippe spoke in an undertone.

"Hawks, endurance has ceased to be a virtue with me. For years you have refused to listen to me, or I would have told you where she was. Do you hear me?"

Again Alfred whispered in response.

"You treated her cruelly, Hawks, or she would never have left you; and you had not the slightest reason so long as she was in your house. I saw her less than a year ago, and she thinks you are dead.

"Hawks, I did not undeceive her. For her sake I let her suppose you dead, to keep you from destroying her present happiness. Had you acted reasonably with me, I should have told you her story long ago; but you followed me here, and I did not fear you. For any wrong that I have done you, Hawks, I am ready to make reparation; but you have always been mistaken. To keep you from abusing Mary—from beating her even—do you hear, Hawks? from beating her! she wanted you to think her dead.

"You accused me of killing her. Had you shown any signs of relenting, I should have told you where she lived.

"Hawks, unless you give me a solemn promise to treat her kindly—a promise which you dare not break, I shall not tell you her name or where she is.

"Fail to keep that promise, and I shall have you arrested for attempted murder. For her sake I have shielded you thus far—now take your choice."

He paused for a moment and seemed to wait for a response, but Alfred merely moved to show that he was there, not daring to speak.

"Another thing, Hawks," Trippe continued; "I

could easily have you hanged for the murder of Morgan. I saw you, covered with blood as you were before you shot at me; but I happened to know the circumstances."

Trembling in every limb, Alfred listened to these words, and a rash thought flashed through his mind which added to his excitement. Could he put this man out of the way without detection? Even to himself he had to confess that he was too cowardly.

"Listen, Hawks; I don't want to harm you, but this thing must stop. Take your choice—it is the last offer. One thing more: what have you to do with young Guerry? It took many years for his poor old father to make up that sum to Mr. Carter—and another thing like that would kill him. Are you holding that old paper against him?"

Something like a sob fell on Trippe's ear, and he listened eagerly for a moment ere he continued:

"If you have any pity in your soul, let that boy alone. As for myself, I defy you; but I give you one week's time. If you are here when I get up again I shall hand you over to the authorities, unless you give me your promise to——"

The slamming of the gate interrupted Trippe, and they heard voices in the yard. Guerry sprang to the door, but saw Stannard and Crawford entering the hall. Crouching in the corner, nearly concealed, in the feeble light of the room, by a large chair, he breathlessly waited for a chance to escape.

CHAPTER XX.

OLD HAWKS GIVES STANNARD A VALUABLE PACKET
OF PAPERS—HIS STORY.

"Why, Trippe," said Stannard, entering the room, "alone here in the dark? Why don't you have the lights in?"

"I wanted to reflect a little in the twilight. Where have you been roaming?"

"Down to the creek. Crawford, come in here; Trippe doesn't mind a bit of smoke."

"I rather like it. I'd like to try a cigar myself."

Crawford sauntered lazily into the room and went to Trippe's bedside. Taking advantage of a second when their backs were turned, Alfred sprang into the hall, and running to the end of the porch, leaped into the garden.

"What was that?" cried Stannard, starting for the door; "I'm sure a man left this room."

Crawford followed him to the garden, but they could see nothing, and returned to be joked by Trippe about the delusion.

Still Stannard could not drive it from his mind, nor could he believe that he was mistaken in his impression, but he said no more, and joined in the conversation of his friends.

But a few yards beyond the house was a corn-field running out to the woodland, and into this Alfred ran, not feeling safe from pursuit until he had reached the swamps.

Concealing himself in a clump of bushes, he sat down to rest, and to think over the words that had fallen from the doctor's lips.

"What a fool I have been!" he said to himself; "to let that old man cheat me in this way. Had I gone to my father honestly, I should have known that the money was paid and that he had no hold upon me. Yet how can I break away from him even now?"

It was with bitter regret that he thought of the past, and saw how easy it would have been to follow the path of rectitude, and how hard it was to pursue the path of crime.

Trying in vain to find some solution to his troubles, Alfred started across the bridge, and pausing a moment, plunged into the swamp.

Appling started up close behind him.

"I have them both at last," he said to himself, as he followed along the narrow path; and coming to the open space, he watched Alfred as he disappeared between the logs. A faint gleam of light told the rest of the story, and retracing his steps, the detective went to Raborn's house to make preparations for the arrest.

In less than half an hour, Appling, with the constable and two men to assist them in case of resistance, were on their way to the hut.

Meantime Alfred had entered, and without a word took a low stool in the corner. Not yet had he been able to decide upon a proper course, nor could he make up his mind whether or not he should tell old Hawks what he had heard in Stannard's house.

"Well, what's the matter now?" said Hawks, after waiting for him to speak; "you seem mighty unsociable to-night."

"You would be, I reckon, if you had been through what I have."

"Well, what is it? Relieve yer mind, if yer gwine to. No use being all night about it."

"Let me think a minute, can't you?" said Alfred, snappishly; "I have enough to tell, I assure you of that."

"Out with it, then—have you bin up yonder?"

"Yes."

"Did you see him? Did you say what I told you?" asked Hawks, eagerly.

"Yes, I have, Hawks—he talked to me for half an hour."

"What, talked to you? Ain't he done for, then? Did he know ye? Come, boy, out with it, can't ye?"

"He thought it was you."

"Of course, of course," said the old man, rubbing his hands. "Go on."

"He said you were mistaken, that Mary was alive and well——"

"What? Say that agin, alive?"

"Yes, Hawks; alive and well, and doing well, and——"

With a groan the old man sank back upon his pallet, and covered his face with his hands.

"He said that this was your last chance—you would never see her unless——"

"Yes; where is she—where is she?" he interrupted, quickly raising his head.

"That he won't tell unless you promise not to abuse her—not to trouble her."

Once more Hawks covered his face, and Alfred continued with the story. Without a word the old man listened, now and then rocking his head to and fro as if in deep distress. Alfred began to be alarmed at his manner.

"Come, Hawks, what's the matter? What's all this about?"

"What else did he say—tell the whole on it, can't ye?"

"Hawks, I have told you the whole of it—all I can remember. He said that you might have until he got up to make up your mind. Then, if he found you here he would have you arrested for murder."

"Did he say that? Did he say he'd tell me where——where——"

Convulsive sobs seemed to stop his speech, but Alfred knew what he intended to ask.

"Where Mary is? Didn't I tell you so?" said Alfred, pettishly.

"You needn't be so rough about it though," the old man replied, in a gentler tone than Alfred had ever before heard from his lips.

"Now, Hawks, I've done what you told me—when are you going? Can you go in the morning? Hawks, let us start at once."

There was no reply, and Alfred doubted if the question had been heard.

"Say, Hawks, will you go to-morrow? Where are

the papers you promised me? I've done your work, and now——"

"S'tst," interrupted Hawks, with a sudden bound to his feet; "what is that?"

There were voices at the door, and seizing his rifle old Hawks pointed it at the head of the terrified young man.

"Before Heaven, Hawks, I swear it was not I," cried Alfred, falling upon his knees. "Hawks, they are after me, too."

"Alfred Guerri and Abner Hawks, I arrest you in the name of the law," said Raborn, from without. "Will you give yourselves up quietly, or must we use force."

"It's all right," said Hawks, in a low tone; "but at any other time you'd be a dead man;" and turning to the door he slipped the bolt. "Come in, Raborn, I know you. I should have given up in the mornin' anyhow. Come in if you want—if not we'll come out."

The officers came into the little room and laid their hands on the prisoners.

"Gently, now—gently, Raborn," said old Hawks. "A man with a charge of bird-shot in his side can't do much in the way of a fight. Here's my rifle—send the rest out for a minnit, will ye?"

Raborn took the rifle and waited until Appling had bound Alfred's hands, and led him from the room, then turned to Hawks.

"Hurry up, now—we've no time to spare."

"I won't hinder ye, Raborn. I jist want to git a few of my trucks here."

Raising the pillow, Hawks took a package of papers, and slipping them into his pocket, held his hands together before the constable.

"Didn't expect to see the old Hawk so quiet, did ye, Raborn? If you'd waited till mornin' I'd a saved ye the trouble a coming. Lay the old rifle under cover thar, Raborn, and tie me, if ye want."

Covering the rifle with a blanket, Raborn took a cord from his pocket, but immediately returned it.

"Go on, Hawks—never mind about that."

"Much obliged, Raborn, I sha'n't trick ye. Put out the light arter ye."

On the dry-bridge a wagon was waiting, and in this the prisoners were taken to Raborn's house. Alfred was nearly paralyzed with terror; nor did he utter a word during the night except to ask that the news of his arrest might be kept from his father as long as possible.

That he was arrested for forgery, and that he would be tried for complicity in the murder of old Morgan, he now believed; and in no way could he think of an excuse for escape. Refusing to answer any questions, he sat in moody and sullen silence during that long night giving way entirely to the despondency which had taken possession of him.

It was a slow and tedious drive to Perry on the following day, and it was late in the evening before the party reached the county jail.

Alfred felt his knees shaking beneath him as he saw Stannard there, and would have concealed himself if possible; but if the kindness of the man he had wronged gave him courage for the moment, it did not lessen the hatred that he had been cherishing in his heart.

Clutching Stannard's card in his hand he breathed curses upon him, and swore to be revenged if it was ever in his power.

Nearly an hour passed, and he was roused by Stannard's voice at the door of the next cell in which old Hawks had been placed. Pressing his ear against the crack of the door, he listened intently to catch the conversation that was going on in the passage.

"Doctor, you go in and attend the old man," he heard Stannard say; "and, Harris, this basket is for Guerry. Open that wine for him before sending it in—and this too. This is for the old man. Harris! do the best you can for them to-night, won't you?"

"Certainly I will, colonel, anything I can——"

"And, Harris—be sure not to let her hear it."

"Colonel!" called the doctor, "will you step in here for a moment?"

Alfred could hear no more, but retreated to his pallet, as he heard the jailer at his door.

Entering the cell, Stannard walked to the bed upon which old Hawks was lying. Beckoning him nearer, Hawks asked for a moment alone, and hearing the request the doctor walked into the passage.

A violent burst of coughing prevented the old man from speaking at once, and he pressed his hand upon the wounded side.

"Colonel, you air a humane man, and I want you to tell me suthing—will you tell me? I'll—I'll——" the cough again interrupted his speech.

"Tell me what it is, Hawks. I shall never forget that you saved my father's life."

"You know my—my Mary?"

"Yes, Hawks; I knew her once."

The old man rose upon his elbow and eagerly grasped Stannard's hand.

"Where is she? Tell me where she is?"

"Hawks, I thought she was dead—is she not?"

"I thought so too, till yesterday—that—that—Trippe says she's not. For Heaven's sake, colonel, tell me."

"Indeed I would tell you, Hawks, if I knew, but I have never heard a word from her since——"

"Hasn't he spoke of her?"

"Never. I always thought she was dead. Have you seen Trippe? Hawks, did you shoot him?"

"Ask him? Will you ask him about her? Will you find out for me?"

"I'll ask him if you desire me to do so?"

"Do! Oh, do! I'll serve you all my life if you will. Here!"

Drawing the packet of papers from his pocket, old Hawks handed them to Stannard, and his hands trembled with eagerness.

"Here; the money he"—nodding his head toward Alfred's cell—he giv me. It's yor'n; and here's a lot of letters——"

"Hawks! where did you get these?" cried Stannard, grasping them quickly as he recognized the hand. "Where did you get them?"

"Wait a minnit, and I'll tell ye. I followed you to France."

"Followed me, Hawks!" Stannard exclaimed, in surprise. "What did you follow me for?"

"Read this and you'll see," said Hawks, extending a note, worn and soiled from long use, and bearing a date some years before.

Stannard unfolded the yellow paper and glanced at the signature, then hastily run his eyes over the words. The first part was blurred and torn.

" * * * * blow you shall give me, and henceforth you may consid * * * * shall leave the country forever and go to France, where * * * will take care of me."

The name and many of the words were illegible.

"Hawks, whose name was there when you got it?"

"I don't know; it was jist so then. It was wet and torn when I found it first."

Stannard saw that the letter was intended to deceive, and read on.

"You need not try to find me for I shall change both country and name. He has always been good and kind to me, and I am forced to seek his protection now from my own father. Your suspicions of me are all untrue.

"If ever you think of me think that a blow from your own hand killed your daughter. MARY."

"Did you beat her, Hawks?"

"I was mad—I was mad! I did not know what I was doing, colonel. I would have given my life to have got her back."

The old man buried his face in his hands, and sobbed out his self accusations.

As well as he could, interrupted both by fits of remorse and fits of coughing, Hawks told the story of his daughter's flight.

It would be painful to follow the old man's words, broken as they were, and slowly uttered, and the story can be more briefly told.

Stannard was still abroad when Mary Hawks left her home, driven away by her father's violence and suspicions; and knowing that she could find no acquaintance but him in France, naturally supposed that Mary had gone to join him.

Hawks determined to follow her, but lacked the

means. At this time fate threw an opportunity in his way. Alfred Guerri was then in Macon, a student in a lawyer's office, and through him Hawks determined to obtain the money for his trip abroad to find his daughter, and to revenge himself upon her betrayer.

It did not take long for the old man to get a hold upon the boy, for the first time away from the restraints of home, and he soon formed a plan which was carried out with success.

The lawyer with whom Alfred was reading had many clients in the country, among them a widow by the name of Carter, who had just sent in her crop of cotton to be sold.

Learning that the widow had sent to the lawyer for money, Hawks led the boy to forge an order in Mrs. Carter's name, for the proceeds of the sale. Alfred presented it to the cotton brokers.

Knowing him to be in the office of Mrs. Carter's lawyer, the money was paid without demur by Messrs. Trippe & Johnson, the brokers. Old Hawks met the boy at the corner and took the money from his hand.

"You'll be sure and return it to-morrow," said Alfred, at that moment.

"Certainly! Yes! yes!" replied old Hawks. "I'll return it to-morrow, with the hundred for you."

A man passing heard these words, and hastened into the office of the brokers.

"Brother John," said Doctor Trippe, the man who had seen the money taken from Alfred; "to whom have you just paid money?"

"To young Guerri—on Widow Carter's order."

"Let me see it, please."

Trippe ran his eye over the paper, and knowing to whom the money had been paid, at once pronounced it a forgery.

Procuring an officer they went to arrest the parties, but old Hawks had flown. Terrified beyond measure, Alfred confessed the deed.

"Henry," said John Trippe, kindly to his brother, "we must save the boy—for his father's sake we must spare him—he was led into it."

"The old villain!" said the doctor, "I knew he was up to some rascality."

Putting the order in his pocket, Doctor Trippe rode to Echaconnee, and laid the case before Alfred's father. As ill able as he was to pay the money he promised to do so if they would spare his son. Trippe assured him that he need not fear—he would assume Johnson's share of the present loss, and he and his brother would wait until the money could be paid.

Two years passed, Alfred was sent to college, and Trippe settled at Echaconnee. One evening the doctor was sitting at his desk when old Hawks burst into the room.

"My daughter! You villain! Where is my daughter?" he shrieked, and, raising a stick in his hand, struck at the doctor's head.

A desperate struggle ensued in which the superb physical strength of Trippe alone saved him from death. Finding that he could accomplish nothing, Hawks grasped a package of papers which were lying on the desk, and ran from the house.

Among those papers was the order forged by Alfred Guerry.

With the money first obtained he had gone to France, and followed Stannard to Switzerland, where all trace of him was lost; but one day he heard of Stannard's private marriage in Geneva, and believed that Adela was his own daughter. For many months he sought this woman, and at last found her in a low cellar in Besancon, and upon her death-bed.

Finding that it was not Mary, Hawks was about to leave; but the dying woman detained him, and, telling him Stannard's story, she placed a packet in his hand.

The next day Hawks found himself in a burning fever, and for two weeks was confined to his bed. When he recovered the young woman was dead and buried; and, obtaining a copy of the record, Hawks placed it with the packet and started for home.

Soon after his return he traced Mary to Macon,

and there learned that she had been seen with Doctor Trippe. Burning for revenge he sought Trippe, and attacked him as stated above.

Again the two men met, and Trippe, wishing to shield Mary from her father's wrath, told him that she was dead. For a moment Hawks seemed stunned at the news, and without a word plunged into the woods. Thenceforth he had but one object in life—to kill the man who had, he believed, caused the death of Mary.

Building this secret hut in the Echaconnee swamp, he had lived there for the past years, subsisting as best he could, and waiting, like a tiger for his prey, to slay the man who had deprived him of a daughter. Many times had he seen the doctor riding by; but only twice had he been able to hit him.

Almost breathlessly Stannard listened to this strange story. Hawks fell back exhausted upon his bed, and Stannard looked upon him with pity, while he wondered at his endurance, and the admirable courage of Trippe.

"Hawks!" he said at length, "why did you not give me these papers before?"

"Because I wanted money."

"But I would have given you any price for them."

"How could I know that? With young Guerry I was sure. I had the power to make him give me the money if he married Miss Morgan. I couldn't do anything with you. I wanted money to go away arter I had done my work."

"Oh, Hawks! Hawks! You do not know what you have done," cried Stannard, as he thought how much sorrow might have been spared, had he known the truth earlier.

"You were wrong about Trippe—indeed you are. It was noble in him to protect her at the risk of his life, but I am certain as I live, Hawks, that he never wronged either her or you."

"Mebbe you're right, colonel——"

"Colonel Stannard," said Harris, entering the room, "are you aware how late it is? I shall be obliged to close."

Hastily leaving the cell with an apology to the jailer, Stannard walked back to his room, and eagerly tore open the packet of letters.

It was late in the night when he ceased reading, but he laid aside the last paper with a lighter heart than he had felt for many a month.

"And so I was a dupe throughout," he said to himself when retiring; "even the reputed priest was a confederate—a gambler—a thief. Worse still, he was Adela's lawful husband. Heavens! how can men and women sink so low?"

He retired, but could not sleep.

"It takes sleep from my eyes," he mused, "when I think of that man, who, for paltry gold, pretended to marry me to his own wife. But he has paid the penalty of his crimes."

CHAPTER XXI.

MISS MORGAN'S TRIAL FOR MURDER.

Morning came—the morning of Cecy Morgan's trial, and Stannard was roused from his bed by a rap at his door, and Crawford spoke to him. It was near ten o'clock.

Hastily dressing, Stannard went to his friend's room and found Martin there, conversing with Appling.

"I have just come from the jail," Martin said, "and believe I have everything ready."

"You followed my instructions about Guerry?"

"Certainly, Stannard, I told him that there would be no charge against him, but that he would be detained as a witness."

"What did he say?" Stannard asked, feeling pity for the young man who had been so weak as to be led astray in the manner Alfred had been.

"Nothing; he takes it very coolly, it seems to me."

"I have no right to blame him," thought Stannard, "for it would be hard to find a man who had been duped worse than I have been. Had I been poor, perhaps I, too, might have stooped to crime."

"Crawford saw Hawks," Martin continued, "and had a long talk with him, I believe."

"Is that so, Peyton?"

"Yes, I was with him some time. He volunteers as a witness in Miss Morgan's behalf."

"Did he see it? Was he there that night?"

"Yes—so he says. His story agrees with those we have already—clinches the matter, in fact."

"Come, it is time to go," said Martin. "Stannard, you are to go for Miss Morgan. We will meet you at the court-room."

A closed carriage stood at the door, and Stannard drove to the jail. She was ready for him, and took

his arm at the door, Raborn following them down the stairs.

They had reached the hall below when Hawks was led out, and catching a sight of his face, Cecy started back with a cry, and stood gazing at him in terror.

"Who is that?" she asked, quietly. "Who is he? It is the face that I saw in our garden."

"I know it, Cecy," Stannard answered, "he has volunteered to testify in your favor. Come, I fear we are late—Raborn is impatient."

Fearing every moment that Alferd Guerry would appear, Stannard hurried Cecy from the jail, and followed her into the carriage.

The court-room was densely crowded when they arrived, and it was with difficulty that a passage was cleared for them. In deep mourning and heavily veiled, Cecy entered, leaning on Stannard's arm.

The buzz and hum of the crowd was hushed for a moment, as they passed up to the bar, and Cecy took her seat in the prisoners' box. Stannard drew a stool close beside her.

Not once did Cecy turn her head, nor did she raise her eyes until ordered to unvail, when she fixed them upon the judge. She dare not look around upon that buzzing crowd anxious to get a glimpse of her face.

Ogletree, the overseer, was first examined, and gave the same testimony that he had given before the coroner's jury; but the strict examination drew from him an account of the scene in the garden.

Barton, and Davis, and Carrol, were each upon the stand, but to little purport. At length Stannard's name was called. He could tell no more than he had already told at the inquest, but he gave the evidence with less reluctance, and with a confident air that had its effect upon the jury.

Yet there were times when Cecy felt her heart sinking, as she saw how strong the circumstances were against her, and heard the murmurings of the bystanders whenever a strong point was made by the prosecution.

That terrible morning was brought back to her mind with a clearness she had not thought possible, and more than once she herself was persuaded that her father had really been murdered, although she knew herself innocent.

But when they spoke of that bloody knife in her hand—when they showed—or assumed to show the strongest proofs against her—she began to wonder if it were really possible for one to commit such a crime when in an unconscious state. With the keenest interest she now watched the proceedings, listening now and then to the whisperings of the crowd beyond the bar.

It was a great relief to her when Stannard returned to her side, and when she heard that the court was ready to hear the defense. What could it all mean? What would be the result, should they find her guilty of murder?

She turned her eyes upon Crawford's handsome face as he rose near her, gaining courage from the first words that fell from his lips.

"I have here, your honor, and gentlemen of the jury," Crawford said, in his clear, musical voice, "the affidavit of the surgeon who attended Mr. Morgan before his death who was with him when he died, and who made a scientific post-mortem of the wounds.

"It will be seen here—on the testimony of an expert—that no murder was committed, and we hope to bring forward substantial evidence that must place the matter beyond a doubt. This affi——"

The noise and confusion at the door drowned Crawford's voice, and he turned angrily in that direction.

"Silence in court!" the sheriff cried, but with no effect; and again he repeated the words at the top of his voice.

Still the crowd was pushing and swaying by the door; and out of patience at last, Crawford appealed to the court.

"Mr. Sheriff, will you clear the room?" said the

judge, rising on the bench; "we cannot have this confusion."

Crawford tapped his table petulantly as he saw the crowd dividing near the bar; but in a moment the look of annoyance passed from his face, and he sprang forward eagerly as he recognized the pale, wan face of Doctor Trippe.

"An important witness for the defense, your honor," said Martin, rising; and he, too, stepped down the aisle.

Assisted by two men, Trippe came up slowly, and behind him, with a pillow in her hand, was his little wife, every moment springing to his side as she saw signs of fatigue.

Mrs. Trippe stepped near Cecy, and said in a low tone:

"How sorry I am, dear, that we arrived so late—I wanted to come in with you, when I found he would come. We had to drive very slowly, as you understand."

Tears gathered in Cecy's eyes as she endeavored to bow her thanks, and to express her gratitude for this kindly sympathy.

On the day that Crawford and Stannard had left him, Trippe appeared to acquiesce in their opinions, and he had said nothing to them of his intention when he had sworn to the affidavit; but no sooner had they left the house on the following morning than he expressed his determination to go to Perry.

In vain his wife begged and prayed him to remain.

"My dear," he said to her, "I should never feel easy in mind again if I failed to go. I have more stamina than you think. Come, now, little wife, we have a day and a half; make the best of it, for I must go."

She could not turn him from the purpose, and that night they were within ten miles of Perry. The next morning they made the remaining distance, arriving too late, however, for Mrs. Trippe to enter court with Cecy.

Meanwhile Doctor Pierce had come up as usual on the morning train, and found his patient gone.

He determined to follow him, more than half expecting to find Trippe at some farm-house on the road.

Every horse was in use on this important day; but Pierce walked up the hill to Carrol's house, where he managed to get a saddle mule, and thus mounted, galloped the entire distance, and hurried to the court-house.

The crowded room was hushed when Doctor Trippe was called upon the stand, and all present saw that his evidence, whatever it was, would carry the day.

Owing to his weakness he was permitted to sit; and in a feeble voice, with frequent pauses for breath, Trippe began the story of Morgan's suicide; but his words carried conviction with them, and ere he closed his voice was drowned by a hearty burst of applause.

Threatening to clear the room entirely unless there was order in court, the sheriff again obtained silence, and Trippe began to repeat his concluding words.

Even then, had the case been submitted, the jury would have given a verdict in Miss Morgan's favor.

"If there is a doubt in any mind," Trippe concluded, "I beg leave to submit my statement to any expert surgeon; and I believe that I can show the truth of all my statements and conclusions."

Turning to the prosecution, Crawford submitted the witness; but one or two important questions only were asked in the cross-examination.

Trippe sank back upon the pillow, thoroughly exhausted, and Crawford stepped forward to make him comfortable upon the chairs. Stannard slipped a card in his hand.

"Abner Hawks!" called the sheriff. "Is Abner Hawks in court?"

The old man came forward, and as he stepped into the box, Crawford glanced at the card.

"Peyton!" Stannard had written. "Do not call up Guerry if you can do without him."

"I should like to have him there if I was on the other side," thought Crawford, looking over to the

expressionless face of the young man, crouching in a corner.

"What is your name?" asked Martin at that moment, beginning to question the witness.

"Abner Hawks."

"Where do you live!"

"At Echaconnee."

"Did you know Daniel Morgan?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you at the house on the night of his death—or the evening before his death?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you tell the court what you saw there?"

"Tell it in your own words," his honor remarked; "give the story in your own way."

Stripped of barbarism and peculiar Georgia English, old Hawks gave the following statement:

"About an hour after dark I went up to Morgan's house to have a few words with a young man who was courting Morgan's daughter—that young lady there.

"He came up to the fence, and I stepped into the bushes a few paces off, to wait until he got through with the girl. She came up to the fence on the other side—right smartly frightened, and begged him to go off.

"He didn't want to go, and kept her there until I saw Morgan creeping out of the house. He came up to the bushes where they were, looked at them for a minute, then went into the house.

"Pretty soon he came out with his gun. I coughed and clucked to them, and she ran to the house just in time to stop old Morgan in the path.

"They were pulling at each other for a moment, and then Morgan knocked her down. I saw he was out of his head entirely. I was just going to help the girl when Morgan fired into the bushes, where I was, and hit me in the side."

For the first time Cecy turned her head, and looked full into the face of the old man. This, then, was the explanation of the cry that she had heard.

"I thought he had killed me," continued Hawks, "and went down the road. Seeing the young man

riding away, I thought it too bad to leave that girl alone with a maniac; and as soon as I could stop the blood a little, went back to the house.

"Just as I got back I looked through the window, and saw Morgan draw his daughter into his room and bolt the door. Pretty soon he drew a long knife from under his pillow.

"She—Miss Morgan—screamed for help, and I thought it about time to interfere. I smashed in the window. Miss Morgan had fainted on the floor. I never saw a man's eyes like Morgan's. They were like two balls of fire.

"When he heard the window smash, and saw me there, he appeared to get madder like, and began to stick himself in the breast. He broke for me, sticking himself at every step, screaming like mad, and fell over a chair.

"I got behind the vines. Morgan got up again in a minute, and, fearing he would do Cecy more harm, I went to the window again.

"Morgan looked down on her once, then began to yell again like mad, sticking himself at every yell.

"Just then I saw the people break in at the door, and ran into the garden. Feeling faintly sick, I laid down in the garden, and didn't get up until I heard somebody coming into the yard.

"It was Colonel Stannard. Taking one more peep through the vines I saw Miss Morgan on the sofa, and the doctor, with two or three more, round the bed. She saw me then. The neighbors began to come, and I went home. That's all I know about it."

Bowing to his opponent, Martin gave the witness up, and a sharp cross-examination failed to shake him in any particular. It was evident that the defense had made out their case, and there was no desire to prolong the suspense that, it seemed to all, must be very trying to Miss Morgan.

"One or two more questions," said the State Attorney in conclusion:

"Hawks, have you seen Doctor Trippe since that morning?"

"Not till I seen him here."

"Have you not spoken with him at all?"

"Haven't heard the sound of his voice till jist now."

Trippe looked up curiously, and believed that old Abner was swearing to a lie.

"Have you spoken to any one about this matter?"

"No—I've been on my back pretty much all the time—I hain't mentioned it, nor nobody ain't mentioned it to me. I ain't seen anybody to talk to."

"Who was the young man you went to meet?"

"Guerry—Alfred Guerry."

"Was he not forbidden Morgan's house?"

"I heard so."

"What did he come for that night?"

"Came to see the girl, I suppose."

"What were you there for?"

"I went to speak to Guerry 'bout business?"

"What was that business?"

"Private business."

"But what was that business?"

"I object to that question," said Crawford.

"Well, how did you know he was there?"

"I didn't know till I seen him there."

"Then how could you have had business with him?"

"I was gwine to meet him up the road."

"What had you to do with him, that you should meet him in the road?"

"I object to the question," said Crawford, again; and the objection being sustained, the witness was discharged.

Until these last questions were asked, there had not been a doubt in the minds of the spectators as to the result; but those who are unskilled in law are apt to argue ill from a refusal to answer any questions, and again a buzz of whispers was heard throughout the room.

It took not long for the counsel to present their cases to the court, and in a few moments the jury retired.

Anxious to say a word of encouragement to Cecy, Doctor Trippe rose from his seat; but the fatigue and excitement had been too much for him, and he fainted in Stannard's arms.

At that moment, Ham Pierce pushed his way through the crowd, and assisted his friends in bearing Trippe from the room.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE STORY OF MARY HAWKS.

Scarcely had the bustle caused by Doctor Trippe's removal began to subside, when the jury returned to their seats. Not five minutes had they been in consultation, and the foreman now arose to announce a unanimous verdict of acquittal.

Cecy instantly lowered her vail, and her friends pressed around her to offer their congratulations.

Leaning upon Stannard's arm, she passed down the aisle, and when near the bar she saw Alfred sitting in the corner.

He cast down his eyes, and turned aside his face. Cecy wondered at her calmness as she looked at him. Searching her own heart, then and afterward, she could find no feeling there but that of pity—sincere pity; and still more she wondered how it was that she had ever yielded to her fancy for him.

"Drive me back to my little room, please," she said to Stannard, as they entered the carriage, "I do not want to go to the hotel."

Stannard understood her reluctance to expose herself to the gaze of the crowd, which had now gathered about the hotel in expectation of her coming, and ordered the coachman to drive back to the jail.

At that moment, Mrs. Bond's splendid carriage swept round the corner, and Stannard waved his hand to attract her notice. She drove after them to the jail.

With tears in her eyes, Cecy followed her friend into the little room, and once more looked around upon all her treasures. Mrs. Bond embraced her cordially.

"You will think it strange," said Cecy, presently;

"perhaps you cannot understand it; but I must say that I have been very happy here."

"Perhaps I can understand it, Cecy; well—you belong to me now, at least for a time, and I shall carry you off to-night."

Stannard came to the door.

"I came for orders, Cecy. What is your programme?"

"Turn Cecy over to me, Colonel Stannard," said Mrs. Bond, "I will take charge of her now. She will go to my house for the present."

"Thanks! That is the best. I am glad you came."

"I have been a great charge to you, have I not?" asked Cecy, smiling.

"Yes, indeed, Cecy, I don't think that I ever worried about any one so much."

"All's well that ends well," said Mrs. Bond. "Come at four o'clock, colonel, and you may see us off. Perhaps I may let you ride with us."

"I wish you would," said Cecy, quickly, but in a moment her face was reddened with blushes.

"Thank you, Cecy; but now you are in safe hands, I will look out for poor Trippe——"

"How selfish I am—I had forgotten him. Do see that he is well taken care of."

"My horses are here, and I shall have the carriage specially fitted up for him. Crawford will not go home with me now, but is coming up soon; and I have nothing else to do than to see Trippe safe home."

"Have you—do you remember," Cecy began, but stammering over the words; "will you see to what I asked you?"

"Certainly I will, Cecy, I'll go about it at once. Good-by for the present."

As the door closed behind him Mrs. Bond looked at her friend, and, gazing steadily into Cecy's eyes, the tell-tale blushes suffused her cheek. For a second or two they stood thus, and then were locked in a warm embrace, each knowing the other's thoughts and feelings. The silence between them was more eloquent than words.

Stannard went directly to Trippe's room, and

found him bright and cheerful, sitting up in an easy-chair.

"Come, Stannard, you are just in time," Trippe said, gayly; "Ham is trying to persuade me that I am still sick."

"Weak then," said Pierce, laughing, "if you like that word better."

"Weak! Come now, Ham, I'll wrestle with you for your bill—what say? Double or off?"

"Don't talk to me about a bill."

"Your car fare, then, and extras."

"Why, man, I've been doubly paid already, Stannard there has furnished me with unlimited funds."

A look of love came into Trippe's eyes as he gazed upon Stannard's face, and made a mental addition to his debt of gratitude.

"It was the heat of that crowded room," said Trippe, in a subdued voice; "give me plenty of fresh air and I shall be strong enough."

He had turned the subject, not daring to express his feelings of gratitude to Stannard.

"I've got twice the stamina you have, Ham," Trippe concluded, "even after this long pull."

A rap at the door made them turn, and a waiter entered.

"Massa Trippe, old ge-ge-gemman he-ya. wa-wa-want see Mas-mas's Trippe. Haw—Haw—Hawk he say he's na-name is. See—suthin oder like dat ar."

The stuttering of the negro raised a hearty laugh, and put the party in the best of spirits.

"Tell him to come up," said Trippe, laughing loudly.

"He's—he's—he's do—done he yah," the boy replied, grinning all over his face, and throwing open the door.

Half bent and very much broken, old Hawks entered the room, and, trembling dreadfully, bowed to the men present.

"Great Heaven! what a wreck!" exclaimed Trippe in surprise.

Martin also came to the door to find Stannard.

"Guerry is in my room with Crawford—will you come in, colonel?"

"Wait a little," said Trippe, "Stannard, I wish you would stay a half-hour or so—tell them to wait for you."

Stannard took a chair by the window as they left the room, and Trippe called the old man forward. He was, indeed, terribly broken and subdued.

"Hawks!" Trippe began, "you remember what I told you the other day—what do you want to say?"

Stannard looked up in surprise as he heard this, remembering what the old man had said in court, and the look did not escape the keen eyes of Trippe.

"You are surprised, Stannard, but I will tell you the story presently."

"I know it already. Hawks told me when he brought me the papers that I most desired of all things in the world. You, Trippe, will know what I mean."

"Hawks, that shows a change in you, is it so?"

"Tell me where she is, doctor; for Heaven's sake tell me, and I'll do anything you want me."

"Good! we'll see about that. Stannard, are you—is—is," Trippe hesitated and glanced at Hawks.

"I know what you would ask. Yes, thanks to him I have learned the truth at last. Read that."

Taking the last two of the series of papers from his pocket, Stannard handed them to Trippe, giving him a brief sketch of old Hawks' search in France.

"Monstrous! horrible!" exclaimed Trippe, as he read Adela's confession of the mock marriage, and how she was forced into it. "Out of romance I don't think that I ever heard anything like that. Stannard, I hope this was the brute that you shot."

"It was the same. He had taken the money from that poor woman, and when he died his confederate ran off with it, leaving her to starve. Had I known it, she should not have wanted; but the poor girl kept her compact with me when left to herself. Some time you shall read the whole."

"Hawks, once more I ask you what are you going to do about what I told you at——"

"Doctor, it weren't me—'twas young Guerry. I sent him."

"It was Guerry!" exclaimed Trippe, "what had he

to do with it? Stannard, it was the man you saw that evening—that you and Crawford followed.”

“I knew it was some one, despite your chaff about it.”

“I sent him,” pursued Hawks, “because he told me you war dying. I believed you war the cause of her death. Tell me, doctor,” he continued, changing to a whining tone of entreaty, “tell me where she is.”

“Stannard!” said Trippe, turning abruptly to his friend, and not heeding the old man’s question, “you remember little Mary Hawks?”

“Very well—that is when a little girl.”

“She was only sixteen when she went away from home. I was then with my brother in Macon, and was one day walking along the streets when I saw Mary sitting upon some steps, and crying as if her heart was broken. She had a small bundle by her side, and I saw at once that she was in distress.

“Early in that year she had been at school in the city, and I attended her when she was sick. She was known there as Mary Garland.”

“It was her mother’s name,” said the old man, with a sob.

“Girls are not generous to each other,” continued Trippe, without heeding the interruption, “and fearing that the others would ridicule her, Hawks had the good sense to give her the name that her mother had borne. In a month she was the pet of the college, and I——”

Another sob from the old man, turned their attention to him, and they saw that he was crying bitterly.

“And I was very fond of her. She went home during the vacation, and the next time that I spoke to her she was sitting upon the street as I have told you.

“I spoke to her gently, and soon gained her story. When at the school a young man had professed love for her; and Mary did not deny her love for him. He followed her home, and, although she would not permit him to come to the house, she met him several times, in a grove, about a mile away.

"Her father—you, Hawks, suspected these meetings, and began to persecute her about them. More than once he struck her, Stannard; and at best he made a perfect hell of her home.

"One day he determined to watch her, and just as he came upon them, I happened to ride by. The young man escaped unseen; but Hawks—I tell the story as if you were not here—but her father saw me, it seems, and accused Mary of coming to meet me.

"It made me shudder to hear her tell the story of his wrath. He continued to beat her until she was bruised from head to foot, and called her the vilest names until he, himself, was wearied.

"The next day, Mary told all to her lover, and he induced her to go away with him. That night she met him, and together they drove to the city; but once in his power, this young devil laughed at the idea of marrying her, and made infamous proposals.

"Making him repeat his words, and asking him to say again if he really meant it, Mary learned the truth, and immediately fled from him."

"Who was he? Tell me who the villain was?" screamed old Hawks, springing to his feet with clenched hands.

"Take care, Hawks," Trippe said, calmly. "No more violence, remember. Unless you promise me now to curb your temper, I shall tell you no more."

The old man sank back into his chair, and eagerly gave the required promise.

"All that night Mary wandered about the streets, and it was in the morning that I found her. She had left a note at home, telling her father that she was going abroad, purposely blotting out the name of her lover.

"With her tears flowing freely, Mary told me this story, and begged me not to tell her father where she was. She feared that he would kill her, even; and I think that he would have done it then.

"Taking Mary to my brother John's house, a new name was given her, and in a week John sent her to Milledgeville to be a companion and friend for our aged mother.

"There she remained until about a year ago, when she married a minister—a man of some property, and well thought of in the town where he lives. It is many miles from Milledgeville, Hawks, and you will never find her unless you promise not to annoy her.

"She thinks you are dead, Hawks! Would you go now and break up her happy home?"

"No! no!" sobbed the old man; "just let me see her; only let me see her once more to beg her pardon for the past, and I'll never see her again."

"He'll not have long to see her at best," Trippe whispered; "he will not live a month."

"Who was it, doctor—who was it that attempted to ruin her? Tell me now, and I'll swear to forgive him."

"I'll try you, Hawks; it was Alfred Guerry."

"Him!" almost screamed the old man, rising, "that rascal—he hired me to murder old Morga—the villain——"

Instantly recalling his promise and fearing that Trippe would not tell him where Mary lived, Hawks sank back into his chair, muttering:

"But I forgive him! I forgive him!"

Trippe and Stannard were gazing at the old man in consternation. The doctor knew that Hawks had not committed the murder, but was it true that he had gone for that purpose?"

"Hawks! we will be friends to you if you will act right—now tell us the secret of this affair. Why did Guerry hire you to kill Morgan?" Trippe asked.

"I wouldn't a done it, doctor—I didn't mean to do it. I seed that Morgan hadn't long to live, and I wanted to make that—that young fellar think that I did it. He give me this paper."

Unfolding his wallet, Hawks laid the compact before them; and they read it in silence, merely looking into each other's eyes.

"I wanted money—I wanted to be revenged for Mary. I followed you the fust time, and heard the colonel thar tell you he'd give Guerry his Crawford place. I told him I'd make the colonel give him a fortin'. He was to give me two thousand for gitting

Morgan out of the way, two for getting him t'other fortin', and one for the papers I give the colonel thar.

"In course I shouldn't a done it, but he'd think I did. He was to give me the money when he married Morgan's daughter. Oh! if I'd a-known—if I'd a-known 'twas him——"

"But, Hawks, how did you get this hold upon him?"

"That forged paper on the Widder Carter. He never knew it was paid, and didn't want me to ruin him."

"Heavens! Hawks! what a villain you have been!"

"I wouldn't a-done it if I'd known Mary was a living."

"Trippe," said Stannard, "Alfred has been more sinned against than sinning. He is simply too weak to resist the fear of exposure—perhaps I have been as bad."

"Stannard, I admit a part of it, but he has a hard heart. I knew it when he tried to deceive Mary Hawks. Perhaps this lesson will do him good, but I have my doubt. Bring up a boy as he was brought up at home—taught to believe that every innocent pleasure is a sin, and he's about sure to run riot when he gets away from the restraints of home."

"We must save him, Trippe—we must send him away for a few years, until this is forgotten."

"Doctor, do tell me where she is. I'll git on my knees to ye if ye want."

"Wait, Hawks, go to my house and stay until I get well, then I will take you to her myself."

Like a dog the old man fell at Doctor Trippe's feet, and began to kiss his hands, as he begged to be forgiven for the past.

"And you must forgive him first, Hawks."

The old man started back for an instant, and the former fire seemed to come into his eyes; but he bowed his head again, and renewed his promise while groveling at the doctor's feet.

"Stannard, will you step out for Alf Guerry—bring him in here for a few moments."

Pale and dejected, but bowing his head with shame, Alfred followed Stannard into Trippe's room; but he started back with fear as he saw old Hawks there. The old man looked at him sullenly, but dared not speak.

"Guerry," said Trippe, "what is said here will be a secret between us. We know the history of the past better than you do yourself."

Alfred's eyes had fallen upon the paper which he had given Hawks, and Trippe saw him gazing at it in terror, while his frame began to tremble sadly. Leisurely striking a match, Trippe lighted the paper, and they saw it burn to ashes in his hand.

"Give me the other, Hawks. Give me all you have of this kind. Guerry, you know it is worthless; but you shall see the only record of your weakness destroyed before your own eyes."

"Alf, I cannot talk to you as I wish I could," said Stannard, "but you have done wrong—excuse me for speaking of it, Alf," Stannard apologized, his tender, womanly nature making it impossible for him to hurt this young man's feelings even then; "I do it only to say that we know all—and understand how you were tempted."

"He forced me into it," said Alfred, pointing to Hawks.

"And what did you do—you thief?" cried the old man, stepping menacingly toward him, "you drove my——"

"Hawks," said Trippe, sternly, throwing up his finger.

The gesture drove Hawks back to his chair, and a look of fear came over his face.

Stannard was pained to hear Alfred attempt to throw the responsibility upon the old man in this manner, and for the moment turned to the window.

"I did hope," he said to himself, "that he was less cowardly. I never saw a young fellow so weak."

"Never mind, Alfred," he said, aloud, "let it pass. No matter whose fault it was, you have done wrong. I refused to enter a charge against you, and Trippe would not prosecute Hawks. So far very few know

this thing, and I hope it may still be kept from the people; but, Alf, don't you think it best for you to go away for a year or two?"

"I have no money," he said, scarcely above a whisper.

"Here is the money that Hawks gave me last night. Take it, Alf—go abroad for a time; and if you need more let me hear from you."

Alfred took the money in silence, but still felt that he hated the hand even in giving. But he muttered his thanks faintly.

"You should find this a lesson, I should think," said Trippe, sternly; "but for your father and sisters, I should have exposed you long ago. Perhaps it would have been better had I done it."

"Don't, Trippe, don't say anything more," interrupted Stannard, "let it pass now, I am sure that Alfred can see his duty as well as if we gave him a sermon on it."

Guerry cast a furtive glance upon Stannard's face—looking very handsome at that moment, and, despite the kindness, the generosity, the forbearance that was shown him, felt the feeling of hatred rankling in his heart.

Conscientiously he felt then that these men had wronged him; and such was the effect of the narrow moral code under which he had been reared.

Conscientious, too, Alfred Guerry felt that he had cause for hating the men who had thwarted him in his plans.

"I should have been a good man; I would have given to the church; I could have been generous to the poor; I should have been a Christian, had they not interfered with me, and driven me out into the world."

"Go now, Alfred," said Stannard, extending his hand; "I would go as soon as I saw my people, if I were you. Tell them you were brought here as a witness, and they shall never hear the truth—Heaven bless you."

He took Trippe's hand also, and without asking pardon for the wrongs of which he had been guilty, turned toward the door.

His eye lighted on old Hawks in passing, and in an instant he burst out with a fit of cursing.

"It was you—you old villain, who drove me to this," he cried, in a passion, "I shall curse you till the day of my death."

"Curse away, boy," replied Hawks, keeping one eye on Doctor Trippe, "curses rarely harm a body. They can't phase a feather. But I forgive ye! I forgive ye!" he said, looking still at Trippe.

"You forgive me! what in—have you to forgive—you old——"

"Guerry," said Trippe, sharply, he has enough to forgive—Mary Garland was Mary Hawks!"

With a cry of surprise, Alfred sprang forward, his face growing still paler, if that were possible; but in a moment he hung his head and hurried from the room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

For a moment after Alfred Guerry had burst from the room, Stannard and Trippe had looked at each other in silence. Stannard felt a profound pity for the young man; Trippe thought that he ought to be punished severely.

"I hope this will do him good—from the bottom of my heart I do," said Stannard, presently. "I should hate to see him come to grief again."

"For my part, Stannard," Trippe replied, "I have very little hope of him. What can you expect from boys nursed as he has been! They call me an infidel for saying it, but I shall continue to say, that to hold a child to account for every little sin, or peccadillo, as strictly as you would one with a mature intellect, is the surest way to ruin the best nature in the world."

"Perhaps so; Guerry was always too strict with his children."

"That's all the sympathy I have for that young fellow—I know that he had no youth."

Trippe looked up with a laugh as he saw Stannard yawning.

"'Pon my word you are a nice one to preach to—can't bear a sermon five minutes long. You ought to be made to sit through Hallingshed's two hours and a quarter—on a hot day."

"To tell the truth, Trippe, my mind was wandering—halloo!" he cried, looking at his watch, "it's half-past four."

"Well, suppose it is."

"They told me to meet them at four—Mrs. Bond and Cecy. They are going to start for Macon."

"This evening?"

"They say so. They can do it with those horses by eleven o'clock."

"I doubt it. Well, I'll see my old friend here cared for, and we'll start for home in the morning."

"But will you be able to go so soon?"

"Oh, yes; no doubt of that—I feel—a pair of arms round my neck," Trippe concluded, laughingly, as he took the hands of his wife in his own.

She had stolen in while he was talking, and came to the back of his chair.

"They have sent for you, colonel, the carriage has come for you."

"Have they?" said Stannard, catching up his hat; and in a moment he was down the stairs.

"Just see, Cecy," said Mrs. Bond, as Stannard was shown into the room; "just see what it is to depend on a man. Why are you so late, sir?"

"The time slipped away before I knew it. Indeed I am sorry that I have detained you."

"We are going to stop on the way," said Cecy, quickly, "so it will make no difference."

"Yes, we cannot go on to-night—besides, Cecy wishes to go home in the morning for some things, and for her maid. I wonder you did not bring her, Cecy!"

"I did not want to subject her to life in a jail—I had no idea what it was. I thought they kept people in dark cells."

"All prisoners do not fare in this way, I can assure you of that," said Mrs. Bond.

"I know it. I am indebted to Colonel Stannard for all this."

He felt his face burning as he heard her praise, and, wishing to change the subject, asked where they intended to spend the night.

"I have not the remotest idea," said Mrs. Bond, "where we shall stay?"

"You had better go on to my house, it is entirely empty now. Aunt Emmy will take care of you."

Mrs. Bond approved of the plan, but Cecy did not speak. She found herself lost in gazing on his face, and when her eyes met his, her own face crimsoned with confusion. The look made his heart beat hot and fast, and had they been alone, he

would have thrown himself at her feet and told her the story of his life and love.

"Come, Cecy," said Mrs. Bond, to break the awkward pause, "come, take a last look and let us go. What will you do about your things?"

She looked up into Stannard's face.

"They are not mine," she said, and rushing to a vase near, she took out a faded bouquet. "I shall not leave this—the rest were loaned me, I suppose."

"Indeed they were not, Cecy," said Stannard, quickly, "I bought them for you. They are yours."

"Can I do what I please with them?" she asked.

"Certainly you can. Will you give——"

"Then I shall give them to Mrs. Harris," she interrupted.

"It was what I was about going to suggest," Stannard said, smiling at the eagerness with which she rushed to the door, and called in the jailer's wife.

Kissing the little woman warmly, Cecy gave her the things.

"She has been so good to me. Colonel Stannard, you can't think how good she was in those days. Oh! I can never reward you," she said, again kissing her passionately.

"I have been already rewarded," said Mrs. Harris, glancing at Stannard. "I cannot take——"

Cecy was looking at him intently, and he quickly interrupted the speech which he saw was coming.

"It will give Miss Morgan great pleasure to know that you have her things, and I am sure it is much less than you deserve."

"Certainly it is a great deal less," said Cecy, warmly. "What should I have done had you not been kind to me?"

"Anybody would be kind to you, Miss Morgan."

It was Cecy's turn to blush now, and she felt that her face was scarlet as she saw the look of fondness which he gave her.

Not one word of love had been spoken between them; but it needs not words to tell a tale of love.

"I never had such nice furniture before," said Mrs. Harris, her eyes gleaming with pleasure, as she looked about the handsomely furnished room.

"I am a thousand times obliged to you. May I kiss you for it?"

Again Cecy threw her arms about the happy woman's neck, and pressed a heartfelt kiss upon her lips.

"Dear Mrs. Harris, be good to my birds—they have been daily companions for me. Birdies!" she called to them. "Birdies! come for your last petting. Good-by, my pets! good-by, good-by," she almost sobbed, as, with one glance around, she ran from the room.

Her friends followed her out; but instantly turning, Cecy went to her bureau, and took a withered althea twig from the drawer. Secreting it in her bosom, she rejoined her friends, and soon made her last adieu to the place in which—twist and turn as she would in her mind—she had to confess she had been very happy.

It was late that night when they drove up to the gate of Stannard's house in Echaconnee. For the first time since Louise Stannard left there, she went up that well-known walk, and stood upon the magnolia-shaded porch, upon which she had so often sat in those earlier happier days. But were they happier?

Again and again that night Cecy told herself that she had never been so happy in all her life before. Until late in the night Cecy lay awake thinking of the past, and wondering at herself.

"What must he think of me?" she mused, while thinking of Stannard. "What must he think of one who can change as I have done?"

"Will he believe in such love? Will he believe that I have always loved him? That I did love him even when trying to deceive myself? I wonder if any other poor girl was like me?"

For a long time she pondered over this, to her, momentous question.

"If my mother had lived—if I could have had a mother's care, I should not have been so foolish.

If my father, even, had been kind and confiding with me, I should have been spared that sorrow; but I had no one—no one to tell me anything.

What must he think of one who changes so! Oh! I wish that I had died!"

Thoroughly broken down by the grief those thoughts brought her, Cecy sobbed aloud, and turned her face in the pillow.

Mrs. Bond was aroused, and, thinking that she was sobbing in her sleep, spoke to her; but finding that she was still awake, the sympathizing lady took Cecy's head upon her bosom, and tried to pet away all remembrance of the unhappy thoughts.

The air was cool and pleasant on the following morning when Cecy and her friend drove up to the castle, and they had a fair prospect for the trip to Macon. Dark and gloomy enough the old house looked, entirely closed, as it had been for the past month, and Cecy shuddered as she went up the walk, and recalled that dreadful morning.

A few hours only were spent at home, during which Cecy had put the old place in order, and visited again each cottage in that little village. Once more the negroes crowded around her, kissing her hands, her shawl, her dress; and amid tears of joy and cries of congratulation, she broke away from them, and ran to the carriage.

The crowd followed her to the gate, and the cries of "Good-by, Cecy!" "Good luck, mistress!" and other tones of endearment, made a hubbub that was ringing in their ears as the carriage rolled away.

Waving her handkerchief from the window Cecy saw a shower of old shoes flying after her, and the half-grown children were beside the carriage shouting to her, until the driver whipped up sharply to get away from them.

Meantime, Stannard was slowly driving from Perry, with Doctor Trippe. The doctor and his wife, with Ham Pierce, drove in the coach, while Stannard rode a saddle-horse beside them. Old Hawks was on the driver's box.

Seeing the doctor safely home, Stannard rode on to his own house, and in an hour or two his carriage returned with Doctor Pierce.

"You'll stay with me to-night, Ham, of course?"

"Of course not, my dear fellow. Wait until you get a wife, and then see if you yield to bachelor temptations. I've been a long time away. Is that not the train?"

"Time enough yet. Eat something before you go. Don't wait for me. I'll be back presently."

Going into his library, Stannard wrote a check, and returned to the supper-room. The roaring of the train was clearer now, and swallowing his tea hastily, Pierce started for the door.

"Here, Ham, here's your fee," Stannard said, thrusting the check into the doctor's hand. But he handed it back instantly, after glancing at the amount.

"I cannot take it, Stannard. Trippe is a brother physician, and I could not think of taking pay for attending him."

"But for Miss Morgan."

"Not that amount, certainly. You have already paid me enough, Stannard."

"But, Ham, look here." They were now near the station, and saw the engine-light gleaming at the turn. "See here—your time; you have been away from practice."

The train came rushing up, and was near the depot.

"Make it one-fifth that amount, and come down to see me—no, I won't take it, Stannard! Good-by."

Jumping on the car, Pierce was soon whirling away, and Stannard stood gazing after him.

"He's a true gentleman, if there is one in this world," Stannard thought. "I know that he is poor, and yet he will not take more than the fee of an ordinary doctor."

Slowly walking homeward, Stannard tried hard to think how he could repay his generous friend.

"I have it!" he said aloud, slapping his pocket heartily. "I'll buy that house for him."

* * * * *

If the quiet Echaconnee settlement was aroused, and the minds of the people excited by the news of old Morgan's murder, the result of the trial in Perry

produced a corresponding calm; and in a fortnight no one would have supposed that an event of so great moment had occurred.

The newspapers came out with long items—much to Cecy's disgust—praising the conduct of Miss Morgan; and, so far as Stannard could see, there was not one which did not claim to have predicted Miss Morgan's acquittal from the first.

A week after his return, Stannard received the Fort Valley paper, and opened it to see what the editor had to say. Presently he roared with laughter when by himself, bringing Aunt Emmy, with Stannard's body-servant Tom at her heels, to see what was the matter.

"'Pon my word, that is too good," he said to himself, and again laughing loudly; "I must read that over."

"Our readers will remember that we stated at first that Miss Morgan claimed that her father had committed suicide, although the coroner's jury did not concur in that opinion. We had no idea that they considered Miss Morgan guilty, but that they hoped to bring to light some facts about a young man who was persecuting her with attentions, that greatly annoyed both Miss Morgan and her father. We learn that he has since left the country.

"Our readers will be pleased to hear that Miss Morgan, who is a young lady of great beauty, and high attainments, left the court-room without a stain upon her name, and that she had the full sympathy of all."

"That, that, that," said Stannard, raving again, "did anybody ever before see a paragraph like that? That fellow has impudence enough to exhaust every 'that' in the language."

But this was the last of the affair. The common ways of the country people were renewed; farmers gathered their crops, or met to talk of the elections, and the name of "old Dan Morgan" was forgotten or never mentioned by those who were the most excited over his death.

Winter came and passed, and a new spring was

opening when William Stannard went to Macon, to lead Cecy Morgan to the altar.

During the winter his visits to the city had been frequent, and he often spent weeks there in order to see and be near the woman he so fondly loved. Stannard had told her the story of his youth, and Cecy loved him all the more as she thought how much he had suffered, and how nobly he had treated her.

"I am not worthy such love as yours," she said, when he had told her why he had treated her coolly. "Indeed, I am not worthy of it. I feel like a guilty thing when I think of my past."

"Hush, Cecy; don't say that," he said, fondly; "I cannot bear to hear you talk so."

"But I do feel so. Oh! William, if I had only had my mother; if I had had any woman to guide me, it would have been so different with me. I thought you loved another—I was out of my head; but I did love you even then. You will think me deceitful, it may be, but it is true. I tried to deceive myself."

"It is past, Cecy; don't talk of it now. Tell me, my darling, tell me the day. Don't make it long, Cecy."

As lovers do, they wrangled over the day of the wedding; and though Cecy argued strongly for time, he insisted on the first of May.

Cecy was to be married from Mrs. Bond's house; and in small cities like Macon, a wedding among people of their condition in life creates no little flutter among the beau sex. For days, and weeks, even, Miss Morgan's wedding to so eligible a *parti* as Colonel Stannard was the main topic of conversation.

The wonderful *trousseau*, imported from Paris, was talked and talked of; and happy the girl who, when the day drew near, was able to show a card of invitation to the church.

The last day of April came at length, the last toilets were being hurried home from over-worked milliners, and the preparations for the morrow were complete. Stannard had brought his horses to the

city, and had quarters at the "Lanier" for himself and bachelor friends. Crawford, the "best man," had already arrived from Columbus; Trippe and wife drove up from Echaconnee; and the evening train brought Doctor and Mrs. Pierce, Josh Jones, Lamar, and several other friends from the towns along the railroad, in which Stannard was well known.

Disguise it as he would, Stannard was in a great state of trepidation, and in vain he tried to assume his usual nonchalance of manner.

"It's no use trying to hide it, Stannard," said Ham Pierce, coming out on the balcony where Crawford and Stannard were smoking their cigars. "Not the least bit of use, for it can't be done."

"You've been through it yourself, Ham, and ought to know."

"I speak from experience, of course; but come, Stannard, how do you feel to-night?"

"Now, Ham, 'pon my word, that's the last question I expected from you. Why, that is what everybody says. Peyton, I'd like to know why it is, when a fellow is going to be married, that all married men attempt to poke fun at him? Of course a fellow can't help being a little nervous about it—that is, unless he has as little sensibility as Trippe did when he had his head broke."

"Ha! ha! ha!" came a hearty laugh behind them, and the robust form of Doctor Trippe joined in the circle. "That's it exactly; I never saw the good of that affair until now."

"Good of it, Trippe, how?"

"It furnished Stannard with a new simile. He's like Dick Swiveller in the use of tropes."

"Come, Trippe, don't you begin to chaff me too."

"On the contrary, I came to defend you. This is a very serious matter—take notice, Peyton, you'll——"

"Nonsense, Trippe," interrupted Stannard, "take a cigar and sit down. I want to ask you about old Hawks."

"He is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Crawford, "why I saw some

one—who was it, I wonder? Doctor Sly, may be; anyway, I was told that he was in Columbus.”

“He was there, and is there yet—in the cemetery.”

“You doctors are cool fellows about death; I must say that of you,” said Stannard.

“It is one of the events of life, if you’ll allow the expression. Hawks died over a month ago.”

“Was his daughter with him?” Stannard asked.

“He was with her. There was a great change in the old man after he came to my house, and finding that he was really inclined to do right, I wrote to his daughter about him. Mrs. Manning, as she is now, had no sooner received the letter than she and her husband came up to my place. I feared the old man would die from excess of joy.

“I had given him proper clothing and he looked like a very respectable old gentleman—a country farmer.

“Manning spent a few days with me, but having to preach on Sunday, they went back on Saturday, taking the old man with them.

“Mary wrote of his death afterward, and Manning added a postscript to say that the old man had a change of heart before he died. I believe he did. But for Alfred Guerry, Hawks might have lived a very respectable farmer all his life. It was Guerry’s villainy with Mary, and his subsequent weakness, that led the old man on in his deviltry.”

“And it was the old man who continued to lead Guerry astray.”

“True, Stannard; but I think Guerry the worst of the two.”

“It shows how evil disposed persons lead each other on to commit crimes,” said Crawford, “and we see the same thing in a smaller way, perhaps, every day in our lives.”

For some time the friends chatted together over their cigars; and, at length, forming plans for the morrow they sauntered away to their rooms.

And on this night, Cecy too, was chatting to her friends. Yet the conversation was rather around her than with her, for she dared not trust herself to speak. To her the coming day had terrors of which

Stannard knew nothing; for she knew that a thousand critical eyes would be turned upon her, and that every item of her costume would be the subject of remark.

It was late ere Cecy could close her eyes in sleep; yet before the sun came into her chamber window on that first of May—the eventful day in the life of this fair girl—she was up and ready for her friends, who seemed to enjoy so much the task of robing her for the altar.

Again and again they had admired her, turning her about to catch the varied effects, smoothing a fold in her dress, or bending a flower in her wreath, until master-hands had performed their work complete.

Cecy's heart fluttered as she listened to their praise and wondered if he, too, would like her appearance as well; but it fluttered still more as she heard the carriage at the door, and a minute after caught the sound of his step in the hall.

How grand he looked to her then, as with a quick step and his own sweet smile, he came forward to greet her! Was he not the hero of her life's romance?

"You are beautiful, indeed, Cecy," he whispered in her ear. "Oh, my darling, you do not know how beautiful you are to me!"

She took his arm at the door, and a troop of bridesmaids and groomsmen gathered around them.

Again he whispered to her as they were driving to the church.

"How beautiful you are, Cecy! I wonder if a man could be prouder of a woman than I am of you?"

What to her were the praises of her friends then? The words from his lips were music to her very soul!

The church was crowded when they arrived, and side by side they walked up the aisle. And in all that congregation there was not one who did not call her a beautiful bride.

Her rich white satin robe, her costly laces, her rare wreath of orange flowers, the string of pearls

around her neck, and the pure gems which were seen in the folds of her hair, were all objects far above the criticism of the sex.

They were married. Cecy Morgan came from the church Cecy Stannard, and in that happy hour the trials of her girlhood were forgotten. Was she not happy at last? Bridal presents were showered upon her; kind friends were crowding around her; her wedding had been as brilliant as heart could wish; and was she not his wife?

"No one but Cecy Morgan could have had such a wedding," was a remark that fell from many a dainty lip that day, and many a gleaming eye, for many a day thereafter, saw pictures in the future of a wedding some time to be, no less brilliant, no less grand.

Among the bridal presents was a small packet with the name of Lawyer Martin upon it. Cecy had slipped it into her pocket when bidding her friends adieu, and she had entered the carriage with her husband before again remembering the curiosity which this gift had excited.

"What is it, Cecy?" Stannard asked, as they were driving toward the castle, and she hastily broke the seal to ascertain.

A few pieces of paper fell into her lap.

"What can it be?" she said, running her eye over the words; but in a moment she looked up into her husband's face.

It was the torn will.

"It is as he wished," she said, faintly, as she leaned upon her husband's manly breast, and bowed low her head to hide from him the tears of joy that would roll, in great pearly drops, from her glistening eyes.

* * * * *

Some years have passed since the Echaconnee tragedy occurred, and of the actors in the drama then enacted—some are scattered about the world, and some are dead.

Ham Pierce, as true a man as ever lived, Martin, the honest attorney; Peyton Crawford, rich, gifted, and handsome as a god; and pretty Mary Hawks,

all sleep beneath the sod. Trippe has removed to a city in the interior where he is well-known and respected; Appling is a detective in New York city; and Cecy Stannard, with her husband and her children, still lives in the old castle.

But one yet remains—one whose life and death were stormy—a weak man, capable of better things had circumstances been more favorable; one whose life was like “Sweet bells jangled, harsh and out of tune;” one who had the sympathy of all; one who made a bad use of his life.

Yet, but for that one youthful error, who can say that he would not have been both great and good. “It might have been”—are they not sad words?

Near the Echaconnee church there is one plain slab of white marble, half hidden by grasses, upon which one may read these words:

“Lost in a storm at Sea,
ALFRED GUERRY,
Æt. 29 years.”

Although he does not rest beneath this slab, Alfred Guerry is not forgotten; for often one finds a wreath of flowers upon the stone, evidently wrought by a woman’s hand, showing that one, at least, remembers him as an actor in “Cecy Morgan’s Trial.”

[THE END.]

“A STRANGE PILGRIMAGE,” by Mrs. J. H. WALWORTH, will be published in the next number (62) of THE SELECT SERIES.

THE COUNTY FAIR.

By NEIL BURGESS.



Written from the celebrated play now running its second continuous season in New York, and booked to run a third season in the same theater.

The scenes are among the New Hampshire hills, and picture the bright side of country life. The story is full of amusing events and happy incidents, something after the style of our "Old Homestead," which is having such an enormous sale.

"THE COUNTY FAIR" will be one of the great hits of the season, and should you fail to secure a copy you will miss a literary treat. It is a spirited romance of town and country, and a faithful reproduction of the drama, with the same unique characters, the same graphic scenes, but with the narrative more artistically rounded, and completed than was possible in the brief limits of a dramatic representation. This touching story effectively demonstrates that it is possible to produce a novel which is at once wholesome and interesting in every part, without the introduction of an impure thought or suggestion. Read the following

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS:

Mr. Neil Burgess has rewritten his play, "The County Fair," in story form. It rounds out a narrative which is comparatively but sketched in the play. It only needs the first sentence to set going the memory and imagination of those who have seen the latter and whet the appetite for the rest of this lively conception of a live dramatist.—*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

As "The County Fair" threatens to remain in New York for a long time the general public out of town may be glad to learn that the playwright has put the piece into print in the form of a story. A tale based upon a play may sometimes lack certain literary qualities, but it never is the sort of thing over which any one can fall asleep. Fortunately, "The County Fair" on the stage and in print is by the same author, so there can be no reason for fearing that the book misses any of the points of the drama which has been so successful.—*N. Y. Herald*.

The idea of turning successful plays into novels seems to be getting popular. The latest book of this description is a story reproducing the action and incidents of Neil Burgess' play, "The County Fair." The tale, which is a romance based on scenes of home life and domestic joys and sorrows, follows closely the lines of the drama in story and plot.—*Chicago Daily News*.

Mr. Burgess' amusing play, "The County Fair," has been received with such favor that he has worked it over and expanded it into a novel of more than 200 pages. It will be enjoyed even by those who have never heard the play and still more by those who have.—*Cincinnati Times-Star*.

This touching story effectively demonstrates that it is possible to produce a novel which is at once wholesome and interesting in every part, without the introduction of an impure thought or suggestion.—*Albany Press*.

Street & Smith have issued "The County Fair." This is a faithful reproduction of the drama of that name and is an affecting and vivid story of domestic life, joy and sorrow, and rural scenes.—*San Francisco Call*.

This romance is written from the play of this name and is full of touching incidents.—*Evansville Journal*.

It is founded on the popular play of the same name, in which Neil Burgess, who is also the author of the story, has achieved the dramatic success of the season.—*Fall River Herald*.

The County Fair is No. 33 of "The Select Series," for sale by all Newsdealers, or will be sent, on receipt of price, 25 cents, to any address, postpaid, by STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 25-31 Rose st., New York.

DENMAN THOMPSON'S OLD HOMESTEAD.

STREET & SMITH'S SELECT SERIES No. 23.

Price, 25 Cents.

Some Opinions of the Press.

"As the probabilities are remote of the play 'The Old Homestead' being seen anywhere but in large cities it is only fair that the story of the piece should be printed. Like most stories written from plays it contains a great deal which is not said or done on the boards, yet it is no more verbose than such a story should be, and it gives some good pictures of the scenes and people who for a year or more have been delighting thousands nightly. Uncle Josh, Aunt Tildy, Old Cy Prime, Reuben, the mythical Bill Jones, the sheriff and all the other characters are here, beside some new ones. It is to be hoped that the book will make a large sale, not only on its merits, but that other play owners may feel encouraged to let their works be read by the many thousands who cannot hope to see them on the stage."—*N. Y. Herald*, June 2d.

"Denman Thompson's 'The Old Homestead' is a story of clouds and sunshine alternating over a venerated home; of a grand old man, honest and blunt, who loves his honor as he loves his life, yet suffers the agony of the condemned in learning of the deplorable conduct of a wayward son; a story of country life, love and jealousy, without an impure thought, and with the healthy flavor of the fields in every chapter. It is founded on Denman Thompson's drama of 'The Old Homestead.'"—*N. Y. Press*, May 26th.

"Messrs. Street & Smith, publishers of the *New York Weekly*, have brought out in book-form the story of 'The Old Homestead,' the play which, as produced by Mr. Denman Thompson, has met with such wondrous success. It will probably have a great sale, thus justifying the foresight of the publishers in giving the drama this permanent fiction form."—*N. Y. Morning Journal*, June 2d.

"The popularity of Denman Thompson's play of 'The Old Homestead' has encouraged Street & Smith, evidently with his permission, to publish a good-sized novel with the same title, set in the same scenes and including the same characters and more too. The book is a fair match for the play in the simple good taste and real ability with which it is written. The publishers are Street & Smith, and they have gotten the volume up in cheap popular form."—*N. Y. Graphic*, May 29.

"Denman Thompson's play, 'The Old Homestead,' is familiar, at least by reputation, to every play-goer in the country. Its truth to nature and its simple pathos have been admirably preserved in this story, which is founded upon it and follows its incidents closely. The requirements of the stage make the action a little hurried at times, but the scenes described are brought before the mind's eye with remarkable vividness, and the portrayal of life in the little New England town is almost perfect. Those who have never seen the play can get an excellent idea of what it is like from the book. Both are free from sentimentality and sensation, and are remarkably healthy in tone."—*Albany Express*.

"Denman Thompson's 'Old Homestead' has been put into story-form and is issued by Street & Smith. The story will somewhat explain to those who have not seen it the great popularity of the play."—*Brooklyn Times*, June 8th.

"The fame of Denman Thompson's play, 'Old Homestead,' is world-wide. Tens of thousands have enjoyed it, and frequently recall the pure, lively pleasure they took in its representation. This is the story told in narrative form as well as it was told on the stage, and will be a treat to all, whether they have seen the play or not."—*National Tribune*, Washington, D. C.

"Here we have the shaded lanes, the dusty roads, the hilly pastures, the peaked roofs, the school-house, and the familiar faces of dear old Swanzey, and the story which, dramatized, has packed the largest theater in New York, and has been a success everywhere because of its true and sympathetic touches of nature. All the incidents which have held audiences spell-bound are here recorded—the accusation of robbery directed against the innocent boy, his shame, and leaving home; the dear old Aunt Tilda, who has been courted for thirty years by the mendacious Cy Prime, who has never had the courage to propose; the fall of the country boy into the temptations of city life, and his recovery by the good old man who braves the metropolis to find him. The story embodies all that the play tells, and all that it suggests as well."—*Kansas City Journal*, May 27th.

BERTHA M. CLAY'S

LATEST

Copyright Novels,

IN

THE SELECT SERIES.

Price, 25 Cents Each.

FULLY ILLUSTRATED.

No. 22.—A HEART'S BITTERNESS.

No. 28.—A HEART'S IDOL.

No. 36.—THE GIPSY'S DAUGHTER.

No. 37.—IN LOVES CRUCIBLE.

No. 39.—MARJORIE DEANE.

These novels are among the best ever written by BERTHA M. CLAY, and are enjoying an enormous sale. They are copyrighted and can be had only in THE SELECT SERIES.

For sale by all Booksellers and News Agents, or will be sent, post-paid, to any address in the United States or Canada, on receipt of price, 25 cents each, by

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

P. O. Box 2734.

81 Rose Street, New York.

MRS. GEORGIE SHELDON'S

LATEST

Copyright Novels,

IN

THE SELECT SERIES.

Price, 25 Cents Each.

FULLY ILLUSTRATED.

No. 16—SIBYL'S INFLUENCE.

No. 24—THAT DOWDY.

No. 43—TRIXY.

No. 44—A TRUE ARISTOCRAT.

These novels, from the pen of our gifted author, who writes exclusively for us, are among her most popular productions, and hold the front rank in first-class literature.

For sale by all Booksellers and News Agents, or will be sent, post-paid, to any address in the United States or Canada, on receipt of price, 25 cents each, by

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

P. O. Box 2734.

31 Rose Street, New York.

THE SELECT SERIES
OF

No. 60—WON ON THE HOMESTRETCH, by Mrs. M. C. Williams	25
No. 59—WHOSE WIFE IS SHE? by Annie Lisle.....	25
No. 58—KILDHURM'S OAK, by Julian Hawthorne.....	25
No. 57—STEPPING-STONES, by Marion Harland.....	25
No. 56—THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT, by Mary A. Denison.....	25
No. 55—ROXY HASTINGS, by P. Hamilton Myers.....	25
No. 54—THE FACE OF ROSENFEL, by C. H. Montague.....	25
No. 53—THAT GIRL OF JOHNSON'S, by Jean Kate Ludlum.....	25
No. 52—TRUE TO HERSELF, by Mrs. J. H. Walworth.....	25
No. 51—A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN'S SIN, by Hero Strong.....	25
No. 50—MARRIED IN MASK, by Mansfield Tracy Walworth.....	25
No. 49—GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY, by Mrs. M. V. Victor.....	25
No. 48—THE MIDNIGHT MARRIAGE, by A. M. Douglas.....	25
No. 47—SADIA THE ROSEBUD, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 46—A MOMENT OF MADNESS, by Charles J. Bellamy.....	25
No. 45—WEAKER THAN A WOMAN, by Charlotte M. Brame.....	25
No. 44—A TRUE ARISTOCRAT, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 43—TRIXY, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 42—A DEBT OF VENGEANCE, by Mrs. E. Burke Collins.....	25
No. 41—BEAUTIFUL RIENZI, by Annie Ashmore.....	25
No. 40—AT A GIRL'S MERCY, by Jean Kate Ludlum.....	25
No. 39—MARJORIE DEANE, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 38—BEAUTIFUL, BUT POOR, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 37—IN LOVE'S CRUCIBLE, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 36—THE GIPSY'S DAUGHTER, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 35—CECILE'S MARRIAGE by Lucy Randall Comfort.....	25
No. 34—THE LITTLE WIDOW, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 33—THE COUNTY FAIR, by Neil Burgess.....	25
No. 32—LADY RYHOPE'S LOVER, by Emma G. Jones.....	25
No. 31—MARRIED FOR GOLD, by Mrs. E. Burke Collins.....	25
No. 30—PRETTIEST OF ALL, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 29—THE HEIRESS OF EGREMONT, by Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	25
No. 28—A HEART'S IDOL, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 27—WINIFRED, by Mary Kyle Dallas.....	25
No. 26—FONTELROY, by Francis A. Durivage.....	25
No. 25—THE KING'S TALISMAN, by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.....	25
No. 24—THAT DOWDY, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 23—DENMAN THOMPSON'S OLD HOMESTEAD.....	25
No. 22—A HEART'S BITTERNESS, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 21—THE LOST BRIDE, by Clara Augusta.....	25
No. 20—INGOMAR, by Nathan D. Urner.....	25
No. 19—A LATE REPENTANCE, by Mrs. Mary A. Denison.....	25
No. 18—ROSAMOND, by Mrs. Alex. McVeigh Miller.....	25
No. 17—THE HOUSE OF SECRETS, by Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	25
No. 16—SYBIL'S INFLUENCE, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 15—THE VIRGINIA HEIRESS, by Mrs. May Agnes Fleming.....	25
No. 14—FLORENCE FALKLAND, by Burke Brentford.....	25
No. 13—THE BRIDE-ELECT, by Annie Ashmore.....	25

These popular books are large type editions, well printed, well bound, and in handsome covers. For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers; or sent, *postage free*, on receipt of price, 25 cents each, by the publishers,

STREET & SMITH,
25 to 31 Rose Street, New York.

THE SEA AND SHORE SERIES
OF
POPULAR AMERICAN COPYRIGHT NOVELS,
BY NOTABLE AUTHORS.

No. 4.

THE LOCKSMITH OF LYONS;
OR,
THE WEAVER'S WAR.

By PROFESSOR WM. HENRY PECK,

AUTHOR OF

**"Marlin Marduke," "£15,000 Reward," "Siballa,
the Sorceress," etc.**

From the very opening paragraph this powerful and intensely exciting romance enchains the attention and keeps curiosity constantly active. The scene opens in the manufacturing center of Lyons, during a troublesome period in her history, when the laboring classes strove to maintain their rights against the nobility. The hero, whom fate has made an humble workman, finds opportunity for the display of those self-asserting qualities, which always force their possessor to the front in every contest. While most of the action is thrilling and dramatic, a captivating love episode is adroitly interwoven with the main thread of the romance. The mystery appertaining to the early life of the Locksmith, the appalling accusation which makes him the victim of unseen foes, his fortitude in the most trying positions, and his final vindication and reward, are forcibly and sympathetically set forth in this well constructed story.

PRICE, 25 CENTS.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

[P. O. Box, 2734

31 ROSE STREET, New York;]

BEN HAMED;

OR,

THE CHILDREN OF FATE.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

Street & Smith's Sea and Shore Series, No. 8.
Price, 25 Cents.

WHAT THE PRESS SAY OF IT.

"Ben Hamed" is an Oriental romance by Sylvanus Cobb, which recalls the delightful stories of the "Arabian Nights," without their supernatural effects. Indeed, our old friend Haroun Al Raschid figures prominently in this work, and is closely identified with the hero and heroine—the devoted Assad and the fair Morgiana. It is a romance of pure love, with an ingenious and cleverly sustained plot.—*Grand Rapids Democrat*, Aug. 3.

"Ben Hamed" is the title of an Oriental romance not unlike the stories of the "Arabian Nights." It is a romance of pure love. A number of strong characters combine with the hero and heroine in the solution of an ingenious plot.—*Harrisburg Patriot*, July 23.

Street & Smith of New York have published "Ben Hamed; or, The Children of Fate," by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., which is No. 8 of the SEA AND SHORE SERIES. This book is an Oriental romance, which recalls the "Arabian Nights," without their supernatural effects. The plot is ingenious and well sustained, and brings out a romance of pure love in a charming manner.—*San Francisco Morning Call*, July 21.

"Ben Hamed" is an Oriental romance by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., published in paper by Street & Smith, New York city. It is clever in the way that all of Cobb's stories are clever.—*Indianapolis News*, July 20.

"Ben Hamed is a capital story, progressive in action, interesting from the opening line, and with a charming love romance, on which are strung many remarkable incidents.—*Acton Star*, July 21.

A capital story of Eastern life, which must have been suggested by a perusal of the "Arabian Nights," is Sylvanus Cobb's Oriental narrative of "Ben Hamed; or, The Children of Fate." It is admirably told, full of interest, and cannot fail to charm all who begin its perusal.—*Mortana Sun*, Sept. 22.

Street & Smith, of the NEW YORK WEEKLY, have published "Ben Hamed; or, The Children of Fate," by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr. This is an Oriental romance, accentuated by a very strong and ingenious plot.—*St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 21.

Street & Smith, New York, publish in paper covers "Ben Hamed," an Oriental romance, by Sylvanus Cobb, which recalls the delightful stories of the "Arabian Nights," without their supernatural effects.—*Cincinnati Enquirer*.

"Ben Hamed," an Oriental romance, by Sylvanus Cobb, is published by Street & Smith, New York. It is one of Cobb's characteristic romances, Haroun Al Raschid being a prominent figure. There is nothing strained or unnatural in "Ben Hamed," it recalling the stories of the "Arabian Nights," without their supernatural effects.—*Minneapolis Tribune*, July 21

THE SEA AND SHORE SERIES.

Stories of Strange Adventure Ashore and Afloat.

- No. 23—BUFFALO BILL'S BEST SHOW, by Ned Buntline.
No. 22—THE STRUGGLE FOR MAVERICK, by J. F. Hitts.
No. 21—ROCKY MOUNTAIN SAM, by Burke Brentford.
No. 20—THE HOUSE OF SILENCE, by Dr. J. H. Robinson.
No. 19—THE IRISH MONTE CRISTO'S TRAIL, by Alex. Robertson, M. D.
No. 18—THE YANKEE CHAMPION, by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.
No. 17—FEDORA, from the famous play of the same name, by Victorien Sardou.
No. 16—SIBALLA, THE SORCERESS, by Prof. Wm. H. Peck.
No. 15—THE GOLDEN EAGLE, by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.
No. 14—THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF NEW ORLEANS, by Prof. Wm. H. Peck.
No. 13—THE IRISH MONTE CRISTO ABROAD, by Alex. Robertson, M. D.
No. 12—HELD FOR RANSOM, by Lieut. Murray.
No. 11—THE IRISH MONTE CRISTO'S SEARCH, by Alex. Robertson, M. D.
No. 10—LA TOSCA, from the celebrated play, by Victorien Sardou.
No. 9—THE MAN IN BLUE, by Mary A. Denison.
No. 8—BEN HAMED, by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.
No. 7—CONFESSIONS OF LINSKA.
No. 6—THE MASKED LADY, by Lieutenant Murray.
No. 5—THEODORA, from the celebrated play, by Victorien Sardou.
No. 4—THE LOCKSMITH OF LYONS, by Prof. Wm. H. Peck.
No. 3—THE BROWN PRINCESS, by Mrs. M. V. Victor.
No. 2—THE SILVER SHIP, by Lewis Leon.
No. 1—AN IRISH MONTE CRISTO.

For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers, or will be sent, POSTAGE FREE, to any address in the United States or Canada, on receipt of price, 25 cents each, by the publishers,

STREET & SMITH,

P. O. BOX 2734.

25-31 ROSE STREET, NEW YORK.

The Primrose Edition

OF

COPYRIGHT NOVELS.

Issued Monthly. 50 Cents.

No. 1---ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE, by Bertha M. Clay.

ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE.—This is one of Bertha M. Clay's most effective stories. It forcibly and impressively portrays the evils certain to attend matrimonial deceit, clandestine interviews, and all the tricks and devices which imperil a wife's honor. It has a novel and entrancingly interesting plot, and abounds in vivid and dramatic incidents. It is the first issue of Street & Smith's Primrose Edition of Copyright Novels, and it will not appear elsewhere.—*Franklin Freeman.*

No. 2---THE BELLE OF THE SEASON, by Mrs. Harriet Lewis.

THE BELLE OF THE SEASON.—This is a gracefully told love story, by Mrs. Harriet Lewis, abounding in dramatic action and extremely captivating incidents. The plot is a marvel of ingenuity, not at all extravagant, and the love scenes are very spiritedly depicted. The reader must admire the adroit manner in which the hero and heroine, after innumerable trials, temptations, and misunderstandings, overcome all obstacles to their union, and recognize each other's worth. There is an underplot of deep interest which entrances the charm of romance, and every chapter develops novel and unexpected features. "The Belle of the Season" is one of Mrs. Lewis' most entrancing works, and is likely to have a large sale.—*Pittsburg Leader.*

No. 3---DOCTOR JACK, by St. George Rathborne.

DOCTOR JACK.—A novel, by St. George Rathborne, is an intensely interesting and highly dramatic modern story of an American's adventures in sunny Spain and Oriental Turkey. The scenes are rapid in their action, and yet the reader is given entrancing glimpses of pen painted scenery along the way that charm the senses. It will be conceded on all sides that the author's graphic description of the bull fight at Madrid is the most powerful ever printed; while the events connected with the great Spanish carnival must ever remain a pleasant recollection to the reader. We predict for "Doctor Jack" a sale unequalled since the publication of "Mr. Barnes of New York." The volume is handsomely gotten up, in attractive cover.—*Herald.*

No. 4---KATHLEEN DOUGLAS, by Julia Truitt Bishop.

KATHLEEN DOUGLAS.—Like the plot of an artfully constructed play is this cleverly told romance, by Julia Truitt Bishop, of love and mystery. It is the story of a cruelly suspected yet innocent wife, against whom suspicions are aroused and disseminated by a rejected wooer—a man with the outward semblance of a saint, yet who conceals the heart of an insatiate wretch. The interest is heightened and artistically sustained by making the daughter an inheritor of her mother's supposed disgrace. The golden thread of a pleasing love episode is intertwined with the tragic element of the romance, and from the opening to the close the reader never loses sight of the heroine, the long-suffering but eventually rewarded Kathleen Douglas.

No. 5---HER ROYAL LOVER, by Ary Ecilaw.

These popular books are large type editions, well printed, well bound, and in handsome covers. For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers; or sent, postage free, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

STREET & SMITH,

P. O. Box 2734.

25 to 31 Rose Street, New York.

S. & S. MANUAL LIBRARY.

- No. 1—THE ALBUM WRITER'S ASSISTANT.
- No. 2—THE WAY TO DANCE.
- No. 3—THE WAY TO DO MAGIC.
- No. 4—THE WAY TO WRITE LETTERS.
- No. 5—HOW TO BEHAVE IN SOCIETY.
- No. 6—AMATEUR'S MANUAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY.
- No. 7—OUT-OF-DOOR SPORTS.
- No. 8—HOW TO DO BUSINESS.
- No. 9—THE YOUNG GYMNAST.
- No. 10—THE HUNTER AND ANGLER.
- No. 11—SHORT-HAND FOR EVERYBODY.
- No. 12—THE TAXIDERMIST'S MANUAL.

For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers, or will be sent, POSTAGE FREE, to any address in the United States or Canada, on receipt of price, 10 cents each, by the publishers.

THE HAND-BOOK LIBRARY

- No. 1—WOMEN'S SECRETS; or, How
TO BE BEAUTIFUL. 25c
- Nos. 2-3—TITLED AMERICANS. 50c
- No. 4—SELECT RECITATIONS AND
READINGS. 25c
- No. 5—ZOLA'S FORTUNE-TELLER. 25c

These popular books are large type editions, well printed, well bound, and in handsome covers. For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers; or sent, postage free, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

STREET & SMITH,
P. O. Box 2734. 25 to 31 Rose Street, New York.

The Secret Service Series.

- No. 36—THE GREAT TRAVERS CASE, by Dr. Mark Merrick.
No. 35—MUERTALMA; OR, THE POISONED PIN, by Mar-
maduke Dey.
No. 34—DETECTIVE BOB BRIDGER, by R. M. Taylor.
No. 33—OLD SPECIE, by Alexander Robertson, M. D.
No. 32—ADVENTURES AND EXPLOITS OF THE YOUNGER
BROTHERS, by Henry Dale.
No. 31—A CHASE ROUND THE WORLD, by Mariposa Weir.
No. 30—GOLD-DUST DARRELL, by Burke Brentford.
No. 29—THE POKER KING, by Marline Manly.
No. 28—BOB YOUNGER'S FATE, by Edwin S. Deane.
No. 27—THE REVENUE DETECTIVE, by Police Captain James.
No. 26—UNDER HIS THUMB by Donald J. McKenzie.
No. 25—THE NAVAL DETECTIVE'S CHASE, by Ned Buntline.
No. 24—THE PRAIRIE DETECTIVE, by Leander P. Rich-
ardson.
No. 23—A MYSTERIOUS CASE. by K. F. Hill.
No. 22—THE SOCIETY DETECTIVE, by Oscar Maitland.
No. 21—THE AMERICAN MARQUIS, by Nick Carter.
No. 20—THE MYSTERY OF A MADSTONE, by K. F. Hill.
No. 19—THE SWORDSMAN OF WARSAW, by Tony Pastor.
No. 18—A WALL STREET HAUL, by Nick Carter.
No. 17—THE OLD DETECTIVE'S PUPIL, by Nick Carter.
No. 16—THE MOUNTAINEER DETECTIVE, by Clayton W. Cobb.
No. 15—TOM AND JERRY, by Tony Pastor.
No. 14—THE DETECTIVE'S CLEW, by "Old Hutch."
No. 13—DARKE DARRELL. by Frank H. Stauffer.
No. 12—THE DOG DETECTIVE, by Lieutenant Murray.
No. 11—THE MALTESE CROSS, by Eugene T. Sawyer.
No. 10—THE POST-OFFICE DETECTIVE, by Geo. W. Goode.
No. 9—OLD MORTALITY, by Young Baxter.
No. 8—LITTLE LIGHTNING, by Police Captain James.
No. 7—THE CHOSEN MAN, by Judson R. Taylor.
No. 6—OLD STONEWALL, by Judson R. Taylor.
No. 5—THE MASKED DETECTIVE, by Judson R. Taylor.
No. 4—THE TWIN DETECTIVES. by K. F. Hill.
No. 3—VAN, THE GOVERNMENT DETECTIVE, by "Old
Sleuth."
No. 2—BRUCE ANGELO, by "Old Sleuth."
No. 1—BRANT ADAMS, by "Old Sleuth."

For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers, or will be sent, POSTAGE FREE, to any address in the United States or Canada, on receipt of price, 25 cents each, by the publishers,

STREET & STREET,

P. O. Box 2734.

25 to 31 Rose Street, New York.

The Nugget Library.

ISSUED EVERY THURSDAY. PRICE, 5 CENTS EACH.

- No. 30—McGINTY'S DOUBLE, by Cornelius Shea.
No. 29—SMART ALECK 'WAY DOWN EAST, by Frank.
No. 28—McGINTY'S CHRISTENING, by Cornelius Shea.
No. 27—McGINTY'S BOARDING-HOUSE, by Cornelius Shea.
No. 26—HIS ROYAL NIBS, by John F. Cowan.
No. 25—SMART ALECK IN BOSTON, by Frank.
No. 24—BILLY MAYNE, THE SHARPER, by Walter Fenton.
No. 23—McGINTY'S TWINS, by Cornelius Shea.
No. 22—PHIL AND HIS TORPEDO BOAT, by Harry St. George.
No. 21—McGINTY'S GAMBOLS, by Cornelius Shea.
No. 20—THE MYSTERY AT RAHWAY, by Chester F. Baird.
No. 19—STANLEY'S BOY COURIER, by The Old Showman.
No. 18—DIAMOND DICK'S CLAIM, by W. B. Lawson.
No. 17—DIAMOND DICK'S DEATH TRAIL, by W. B. Lawson.
No. 16—DASHING DIAMOND DICK, by W. B. Lawson.
No. 15—SMART ALECK ON HIS TRAVELS, by Frank.
No. 14—SMART ALECK'S SUCCESS, by Frank.
No. 13—THE SEARCH FOR CAPTAIN KIDD, by Col Juan Lewis.
No. 12—MECHINET, THE FRENCH DETECTIVE, by Francis A. Durivage.
No. 11—BOSS OF LONG HORN CAMP; or, A Fortune for a Ransom, by A. O. Monson.
No. 10—BASE-BALL BOB; or, The King of the Third Base, by Edward T. Taggard (Paul Pryor).
No. 9—YOUNG SANTEE, THE BOOTBLACK PRINCE; or, The Boy Wizard of the Bowery, by Raymond Clyde.
No. 8—NED HAMILTON; or, The Boys of Bassington School, by Fletcher Cowan.
No. 7—THE CRIMSON TRAIL; or, On Custer's Last War-Path, by Buffalo Bill.
No. 6—THE FLOATING ACADEMY; or, The Terrible Secrets of Doctor Switchem's School-Ship, by Dash Dale.
No. 5—NIMBLE NIP, THE CALL-BOY OF THE OLYMPIC THEATER, by John A. Mack.
No. 4—THE GAYEST BOY IN NEW YORK; or, Adventures by Gaslight, by Dash Kingston.
No. 3—BOUNCER BROWN; or, He Was Bound to Find His Father, by Commodore Ah-Look.
No. 2—UNDER THE GULF; or, The Strange Voyage of the Torpedo Boat, by Harry St. George.
No. 1—SMART ALECK; or, A Crank's Legacy, by Frank.
-

For sale by all Newsdealers, or will be sent to any address, post-paid, on receipt of price, 5 cents each, by the publishers,

STREET & SMITH,

P. O. Box 2734.

25-31 Rose Street, New York.

The Log Cabin Library.

Issued Every Thursday. Price, 10 Cents Each.

- No. 53—COONSKIN, THE SCOUT, by Duke Cuyler.
No. 52—RAZZLE-DAZZLE DICK, by Donald J. McKenzie.
No. 51—JENNIE, THE TELEGRAPH OPERATOR, by R. M. Taylor.
No. 50—FRANK AND JESSE JAMES IN MEXICO, by W. B. Lawson.
No. 49—THE YOUNGER BROTHER'S VOW, by Jack Sharp.
No. 48—THE OCEAN DETECTIVE, by Richard J. Storms.
No. 47—THE BLACK RIDERS OF SANTOS, by Eugene T. Sawyer.
No. 46—GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT, by Dan McGinty.
No. 45—MOUNTAIN TOM, by Ned Buntline.
No. 44—PIGTAIL DEMONS, by Harry Temple.
No. 43—RED RUBE BURROWS, by Edwin S. Deane.
No. 42—THE HATFIELD-McCOY VENDETTA, by W. B. Lawson.
No. 41—THE STONY POINT TRAGEDY, by A. L. Fogg.
No. 40—THE GREAT RIVER MYSTERY, by Bartley Campbell.
No. 39—BARNACLE BACKSTAY, by Ned Buntline.
No. 38—ALF, THE CHICAGO SPORT, by Edward Minturn.
No. 37—CY, THE RANGER, by Joseph E. Badger, Jr.
No. 36—HIS HIGHEST STAKE, by Edwin S. Deane.
No. 35—BOB SINGLETON, by David Lowry.
No. 34—KENTUCKY KATE, by Marline Manly.
No. 33—THE ROAD AGENTS, by Leander P. Richardson.
No. 32—RAMON ARANDA, THE CALIFORNIA DETECTIVE, by Eugene T. Sawyer.
No. 31—THE HUMAN VAMPIRE, by K. F. Hill.
No. 30—SHADOWED AND TRAPPED; or, Harry the Sport, by Ned Buntline.
No. 29—THE LIGHTS O' GOTHAM, by Ralph Royal.
No. 28—THE GREAT YACHT RACE, by Marline Manly.
No. 27—JACK, THE PEEPER, by Harry Temple.
No. 26—HUGO, THE FIGHTER, by William H. Bushnell.
No. 25—DARROW, THE FLOATING DETECTIVE, by Ned Buntline.
No. 24—THE SHANGHAIER OF GREENWICH STREET, by Henry Deering.
No. 23—PHENOMENAL PAUL, THE WIZARD PITCHER OF THE LEAGUE, by John Warden.
No. 22—OLD MAN HOWE, by Wm. O. Stoddard.
No. 21—CATTLE KATE, by Lieutenant Carlton.
No. 20—GUISEPPE, THE WEASEL, by Eugene T. Sawyer.
No. 19—LOUISVILLE LUKE, THE JOCKEY WONDER, by Jack Howard.
No. 18—THE OYSTER PIRATES, by Eugene T. Sawyer.
No. 17—SILVER MASK, by Delta Calaveras.
No. 16—THE JOHNSTOWN HERO, by Marline Manly.
No. 15—THE GREAT CRONIN MYSTERY, by Mark Merrick, Esq.
No. 14—DIAMOND DICK IN ARIZONA, by Delta Calaveras.
No. 13—HARRY LOVELL, THE GENTLEMAN RIDER, by Sherwood Stauley.
No. 12—THE MINER DETECTIVE, by Ned Buntline.
No. 11—THE OKLAHOMA DETECTIVE, by Old Broadbrim.
No. 10—THE GOLD-HUNTER DETECTIVE, by Marline Manly.
No. 9—THE IRISH JUDAS; or, The Great Conspiracy Against Parnell, by Clarence Clancool.
No. 8—BILL TREDEGAR, A Tale of the Moonshiners, by Ned Buntline.
No. 7—THE PINERY DEN DETECTIVE, by Mark Merrick, Esq.
No. 6—CAPTAIN KATE, by Leander P. Richardson.
No. 5—THE WHITE CAP DETECTIVE, by Marline Manly.
No. 4—JESSE, THE OUTLAW, A Story of the James Boys, by Captain Jake Shackelford.
No. 3—SEVEN PICKED MEN, by Judson R. Taylor.
No. 2—THE KEWANEE BANK ROBBERY, by J. R. Musick.
No. 1—THE WHITE CAPS, by Marline Manly.

For sale by all Newsdealers, or will be sent to any address, post paid, on receipt of price, 10 cents each, by

STREET & SMITH, PUBLISHERS,
P. O. BOX 2734. 25-3rd ROSE STREET, NEW YORK.



A FIRST-CLASS PAPER FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

ISSUED WEEKLY. PRICE 5 CENTS PER COPY.

Stories are constantly running through the columns of Good News from the pens of

WM. H. THOMES,
OLIVER OPTIC,
HORATIO ALGER, Jr.,
GEO. H. COOMER,
CHAS. BARNARD,
JAMES OTIS,
EDWARD S. ELLIS,
HARRY CASTLEMON

CAPTAIN MACY,
W. B. LAWSON,
Lieut. LOUNSBERRY,
M. QUAD,
Lieut. JAS. K. ORTON,
MAX ADELER,
"FRANK," Author of
"Smart Aleck."

The illustrations and typographical appearance of Good News are in keeping with the high literary merit of its contents. We aim to produce

The Best Weekly of the Times for Boys and Girls,

and, by virtue of our long experience, we have won for Good News the first place in the popular favor of all young Americans.

We will send you No. 1 to No. 10 Good News, inclusive, for 10 cents, as samples.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

P. O. Box 2734.

25 to 31 Rose Street, New York.



THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST!

STREET AND SMITH'S
NEW YORK WEEKLY
A JOURNAL OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE, ROMANCE, AMUSEMENT, &c.

UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE
GREATEST STORY and SKETCH PAPER.

FOR SALE BY ALL BOOKSELLERS AND NEWSDEALERS.

BY MAIL, \$3 A YEAR, POSTAGE FREE.

STREET & SMITH, PUBLISHERS,
25-31 Rose Street,
NEW YORK.

THE MERRY-MAKER ALMANAC.

MAILED FREE TO ANY ADDRESS.

Very Comic---Full of Pictures.

Will Drive the Blues out of a Bag
of Indigo.

Be sure to send for this. Write your
name on a postal card and mail the same
to us, and receive this Almanac FREE.
Address,

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

31 Rose Street, New York.



THE FINEST ON EARTH

—
THE ONLY

Pullman Perfected Safety

VESTIBULED TRAIN SERVICE

WITH DINING CAR

BETWEEN

**CINCINNATI,
INDIANAPOLIS,
AND CHICAGO.**

THE FAVORITE LINE

CINCINNATI to ST. LOUIS,

**Keokuk, Springfield,
and Peoria,**

THE ONLY DIRECT LINE

BETWEEN

Cincinnati, Dayton, Findlay,

**Lima, Toledo, Detroit,
THE LAKE REGIONS and CANADA.**

PULLMAN SLEEPERS ON NIGHT TRAINS.

*Parlor and Chair Cars on Day Trains between Cincinnati and
Points Enumerated, the Year Round.*

M. D. WOODFORD, Vice-Pres.

E. O. McCORMICK, Gen. Pass. Agt.

THE SELECT SERIES

OF

POPULAR AMERICAN COPYRIGHT STORIES.

No. 60—WON ON THE HOMESTRETCH, by Mrs. M. C. Williams	25
No. 59—WHOSE WIFE IS SHE? by Annie Lisle.....	25
No. 58—KILDHURM'S OAK, by Julian Hawthorne.....	25
No. 57—STEPPING-STONES, by Marion Harland.....	25
No. 56—THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT, by Mary A. Denison.....	25
No. 55—ROXY HASTINGS, by P. Hamilton Myers.....	25
No. 54—THE FACE OF ROSENFEL, by C. H. Montague.....	25
No. 53—THAT GIRL OF JOHNSON'S, by Jean Kate Ludlum.....	25
No. 52—TRUE TO HERSELF, by Mrs. J. H. Walworth.....	25
No. 51—A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN'S SIN, by Hero Strong.....	25
No. 50—MARRIED IN MASK, by Mansfield Tracy Walworth.....	25
No. 49—GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY, by Mrs. M. V. Victor.....	25
No. 48—THE MIDNIGHT MARRIAGE, by A. M. Douglas.....	25
No. 47—SADIA THE ROSEBUD, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 46—A MOMENT OF MADNESS, by Charles J. Bellamy.....	25
No. 45—WEAKER THAN A WOMAN, by Charlotte M. Brame.....	25
No. 44—A TRUE ARISTOCRAT, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 43—TRIXY, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 42—A DEBT OF VENGEANCE, by Mrs. E. Burke Collins.....	25
No. 41—BEAUTIFUL RIENZI, by Annie Ashmore.....	25
No. 40—AT A GIRL'S MERCY, by Jean Kate Ludlum.....	25
No. 39—MARJORIE DEANE, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 38—BEAUTIFUL, BUT POOR, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 37—IN LOVE'S CRUCIBLE, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 36—THE GIPSY'S DAUGHTER, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 35—CECILE'S MARRIAGE, by Lucy Randall Comfort.....	25
No. 34—THE LITTLE WIDOW, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 33—THE COUNTY FAIR, by Neil Burgess.....	25
No. 32—LADY RYHOPE'S LOVER, by Emma G. Jones.....	25
No. 31—MARRIED FOR GOLD, by Mrs. E. Burke Collins.....	25
No. 30—PRETTIEST OF ALL, by Julia Edwards.....	25
No. 29—THE HEIRESS OF EGREMONT, by Mrs. Harriet Lewis	25
No. 28—A HEART'S IDOL, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 27—WINIFRED, by Mary Kyle Dallas.....	25
No. 26—FONTELROY, by Francis A. Durivage.....	25
No. 25—THE KING'S TALISMAN, by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.....	25
No. 24—THAT DOWDY, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 23—DENMAN THOMPSON'S OLD HOMESTEAD.....	25
No. 22—A HEART'S BITTERNESS, by Bertha M. Clay.....	25
No. 21—THE LOST BRIDE, by Clara Augusta.....	25
No. 20—INGOMAR, by Nathan D. Urner.....	25
No. 19—A LATE REPENTANCE, by Mrs. Mary A. Denison.....	25
No. 18—ROSAMOND, by Mrs. Alex. McVeigh Miller.....	25
No. 17—THE HOUSE OF SECRETS, by Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	25
No. 16—SYBIL'S INFLUENCE, by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon.....	25
No. 15—THE VIRGINIA HEIRESS, by Mrs. May Agnes Fleming.....	25
No. 14—FLORENCE FALKLAND, by Burke Brentford.....	25
No. 13—THE BRIDE-ELECT, by Annie Ashmore.....	25

These popular books are large type editions, well printed, well bound, and in handsome covers. For sale by all Booksellers and Newsdealers; or sent, *postage free*, on receipt of price, 25 cents each, by the publishers,

STREET & SMITH,

P. O. Box 2734.

25 to 31 Rose Street, New York.

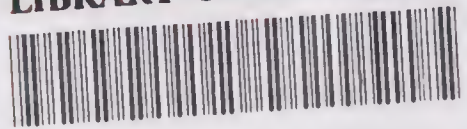
He won't be happy
'till he gets it!

PEARS

PEARS

102

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00022304975